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Shanmukha

IN FOCUS

Entering Eighteen SHANMUKHA Wishes its Contributors, Readers and Well-wishers A Very Happy New Year & Pongal.

SHANMUKHA marches on with new aspirations and hopes, with the benign blessings of Kanchi Acharyas, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi and Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi, who visited the fire-ravaged Hall and wished speedy restoration and early "Kumbhabhishekam".

Modern Cutcheri Pantha was Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar's 'gift' to the music world, one that blended sensitivity with enlightened professionalism. It captivated performing artistes then and now, and is sure to continue as a model in years to come. SHANMUKHA reproduces the Margadarshi's own recording of his 'Margam' for a symposium "The Illustrated Weekly of India" conducted way back in the 'sixties.

Elsewhere a research student chronicles the origin of the concert tradition in Karnatak music and traces it to the norms and forms contained in the Puranas and Tamil classics.

Mysore Bani of Veena play gets a rendition at the hands of a Sangeetha Kalanidhi, while a Kathak doyen traces the origin and development of the artform of Kathak known for its sizzling footwork and Sathvik Abhinaya.

"Music is the highest form in the Concept of Evolution. It is Dharma, it is keerti. All others are Asthiram" — How to develop and preserve this? This year's Sangeetha Kalanidhi suggests 'tips'. SHANMUKHA also echoes the loud thinking of a connoisseur on the Parents' role in developing talents.

Mozart, the 18th century Austrian composer, like many of his genre, remained obscure during his life time, to be recognised and hailed by succeeding generations. SHANMUKHA remembers the master on his 200th death anniversary.

A Sishya pays her tribute to her Guru, Natyacharya Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, who is no more, with nostalgic recollections.

The Concert Tradition

By

ARIYAKUDI T. RAMANUJA IYENGAR

(Reams have been written about the Concert Paddhati of Margadarshi Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. Here the Margadarshi himself speaks of his "Margam".)

It gives me immense pleasure to contribute to this Symposium an article on some aspects of Karnatak music. For, though I can claim a successful and unbroken career, extending over fifty-two years, I have had no opportunity till now to assemble and present my views on *kacheri paddhati* (concert *sampradaya* or tradition).

Here, I propose to deal with *kacheri paddhati*, as I have learnt and practised it on the platform all these years, in the light of its historic background after a rigorous period of gurukulavasa, first under Pudukottai Malayappa Iyer and Namakkal Narasimha Iyengar, and later, for over eleven years, under Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar of Ramnad. More than this, I have had the good fortune to listen to and learn from the expositions of such great masters as Tirukko-dikaval Krishna Iyer, Tiruchi Govindasami Pillai, Saraba Sastri, Sakham Rao, Vinai Dhanammal and a host of others. In vocal concerts today, certain changes are perceptible which, if allowed to grow unchecked, may spell ruin for our great tradition of Karnatak music, and eventually result in the total disappearance of *sampradaya*. This is all the more regrettable when our music is claiming hundreds of adherents in the West.

UNBROKEN HISTORY

It is the peculiar feature of Karnatak music that it has survived the invasions

of kings and chieftains, and feudal wars, in South India to build up a great tradition — a tradition that dates back to Vedic times. The Tamil classics speak of seven Palais, later developing into sixteen Melas, leading to a further emergence of one hundred and three Panns. Those versed in them were the Panars, such as Tiruppanazhwar, Tirunilakantayazhpanar and others. They were not worldly-minded; to them music was divine. They were God-intoxicated and aimed at the attainment of Supreme Bliss. Their devotional and soul-stirring lyrics were sung in the temples. Next, we are deeply indebted to Sarngadeva for his great and invaluable work, *Sangitaratnakara*, in which he describes and interprets the *lakshnas* of Karnatak music.

Karnatak music took its final shape and form from the time of Purandara-dasa, who systematised the laws of teaching music and wrote of innumerable Padas and Prabandhas, besides composing Svaravalis, Gitas, Suladis, Tayam and Alankaras in the Saptatalas as preliminary exercises and early lessons which must necessarily be learnt. Subsequently, Ramamathya, in his work *Svaramelakalanidhi*, condenses the *Sangitaratnakara* and explains the nature of nineteen Melas and their one hundred and sixty-six Janya-Ragas. But it was Venkatamakhi who formulated the scheme of seventy-two Melas in his *Chaturdandi Prakasika*. It is, however, not known if he assigned na-

mes to the several ragas. Later, Akalanka, in his work *Sangitasarasangraha* speaks of a number of ragas and determines their lakshanas. The great work of Govindacharya, *Sangrahachoodamani*, is an authoritative and later contribution, containing lakshanagitas for 366 ragas (including the 72 Melas), and this became the classic authority for the great vidwans like my guru Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar.

"KACHERI"

While the great stream of Karnatak music has been enriched by Vaggeyakaras who have preserved the musical forms, like the Varna, Kriti, Javali, Tillana and Svarajatis, the torch-bearers of South India's musical traditions were the numerous sabha musicians and vidwans, who were patronised by kings, princes and zamindars.

Kacheri is an Urdu word, referring to the musical concerts held in the courts of the Mohammedan rulers in North India. It is akin to those held in the South which were known as aran-gam, sabha or sadas. A kacheri in its early phases was confined to a recital before a select gathering at the royal court or in the assembly hall on an auspicious occasion. The court of Sarabhoji of Tanjore seems to have had on its rolls nearly 350 musicians, each specialised in certain specific branches of vocal or instrumental music, and each waiting for a day in the year to exhibit his skill and prowess!

VARNA SINGING

The celebrated composer of the *Viriboni* Varna in Bhairavi, Pachimiriyam Adiyappayya, was a distinguished musician who adorned the courts of

Tanjore, Pudukkottai and Ettayapuram — as also Pallavi Doraisamy Iyer, Gopala Iyer, Todi Sitarama Iyer, Sankarabharanam Narasayya and several instrumentalists and dancers. Varna singing may be presumed to have been in vogue from Adiyappayya's period. Among his disciples may be counted such distinguished names as Syama Sastri and Ghnaam Krishna Iyer. We are ushered into the treasures of Tyagaraja by Umayalpuram Krishna Bhagavatar and Sundara Bhagavatar, Walajapet Venkatramana Bhagavatar, Tillaisthnaam Rama Iyengar and Tiruvotriyur Thyagier. The point worthy of note is that, while Dikshitar adopted Venkatamakhi's system of Asampurna-mela-paddhati, Tyagaraja followed the Govindacharya Sampradaya of Sampurna-mela-krama.

Like my guru, I have never begun a concert without singing a Varna at the commencement, it imparts mellowness to the voice and a flavour to the subsequent rendering of Kritis or Ragas. Paighat Anantarama Bhagavatar and Bidaram Krishnappa began their concerts with Tana Varnas. In the past (pre-Varna days), performers used to sing Tanas in the Nattai, Gowla, Arabi, Varali and Sri Ragas, to the accompaniment of the Mridangam.

In the concerts, the singer is accompanied on the Violin and the Mridangam. Where a gayaka has specialised in the laya aspects, he revels in having additional, accompaniments, like the Kanjira, Ghatam, Mugarsing, Konnakol and Dholak. In early times, the musicians used to sing in Sthayi-Sruti; now they have lowered it, owing to several exigencies. A performer must be deeply conscious of his strengths and weaknesses. The effect of the

performance should be such as to keep the listeners spell-bound, making them stay on to the very end, thirsting for still more.

Sruti sense, earnestness, a proper conception of raga-swarupa, and good laya-jnana — without these, it is impossible to perform entertainingly. The choice should be from classical pieces conforming to the South Indian type (whatever the language), with a knowledge of the meaning thereof. The purpose should be to elevate and educate the listeners and improve their tastes. The concert should begin with a Varna, to be immediately followed by a few fast-tempo Kritis. A short and crisp alapana, of two or three of the ragas of the kritis to be sung, may be rendered. Kalpana-svaras must be limited and proportionate, and restricted to a few pieces, after a reasonable measure of Niraval.

The pieces selected should be of varied Talas, and no two of the same Tala need be sung consecutively. In rendering Kalpanasvaras, for kritis or pallavis, it would be more appropriate to adopt the traditional mode of sarvalaghu pattern with variations in the nadai in tala imparting ranjakatva, keeping in view the raga-swarupa. An admixture of slow and fast-tempo kritis alternately is preferable. The main

raga for Tana, Pallavi, should be a ghana raga familiar to the audience, and the rendering of the alapana must be fairly lengthy and should explore into the mandharasthayi as well. In the alapana of rare ragas, their distinctive character should reveal themselves at the first touches in all their purity and clearness, and should neither get confused nor clash with ragas closely allied to or resembling them. A couple of opportunities (according to the convenience of the artiste) may be given to the mridangam player — the first, an hour after the commencement, the second during the Pallavi stage, in different Talas of convenient tempos. The items should comprise Padam, Javali, Tevaram, Tiruppugazh, Ashtapadi, Tarangam, Tillana, Raga-malika and Sloka, all of which must form Part II of the concert. The singer should enlist the co-operation of the accompanists all through, with the object of making the concert a success.

Thus it will be seen how the great tradition of Karnatak music has been built up by the South Indian genius. It is up to the vidwans and rasikas to see that this torch of Karnatak music is kept effulgent for all time to come and in all its glory.

Courtesy : The Illustrated Weekly of India, (November 5, 1961).



The Mysore Bani in Veena

By

Mysore V. DORESWAMY IYENGAR

We often come across the word 'BANI', used with reference to various styles of music — vocal and instrumental. In Hindustani music, the term used is 'Gharana'. Though Karnatak music is common to the whole of South India, there are as many styles and techniques, as there are linguistic regions. A seasoned listener can approximately guess the school of music to which the artiste belongs. Each region has developed its own technique, style and native characteristics that are typical and have their own charm. These are the main points that collectively form a 'BANI'.

Differences in Banis are more pronounced in veena, there being three major Banis, viz., Tanjavur, Andhra and Mysore. Great vainikas in each Bani have nurtured and enriched the tradition in their own way. It is a difficult task to convey in writing, the distinct aspects of a 'Bani', which should be heard and experienced. But an attempt is made here to acquaint the readers with the 'Mysore Bani in Veena' by explaining its special technique and method of rendering Ragam and Tanam.

RIGHT HAND TECHNIQUE

The quality of 'Meettu' (plucking of the strings) is given importance. It should be firm, steady and soft. The strings should be plucked with the index and middle fingers alternately. This ensures a continuous flow of sound. There are special exercises

and Swarajatis, specially composed for veena which help a player acquire skill in the art of plucking. Vainikas in the past practised Swarajatis like the one in Mohanam, composed by Vijayanagaram Gururajacharya, which gave the right hand fingers a special practice. The plucking is done with the natural nails on the fingers and not with plectrums.

LEFT HAND TECHNIQUE

Much importance is given to the left hand technique also. One would do well to practise compositions specially composed for veena which will train the fingers to produce all the 'Dasavi-dha Gamakas', referred to in musical treatises, besides helping them to negotiate many a difficult musical passage with speed and ease. Each Gamaka is produced by using the correct techniques like Jaru, Leena, Vali, (inflection of the string on a single fret), 'Spurita; 'Pratyahata' etc., in the right context. The technique of using the left hand index and middle fingers, holding them apart, is another unique feature of the Mysore Bani. This technique helps the player to negotiate a musical passage like p m m g g r r s s n n d d p p m m g g r in Ragas like Bilahari or Kharaharapriya. The whole movement from Tara to Mandra Sthayi is done in a single stroke and in a fast speed. The sound is kept alive by skilful use of the left hand middle finger. This technique can only be acquired by hard practice. The side strings of a veena

are used only to indicate Laghus and Dhrutas of a Taala cycle and never used unnecessarily to disturb the main sound. There should be a balanced use of the different techniques, each one in the right context.

TANAS

The style of rendering of Tanas has its own grandeur and special techniques. Tanas move in a medium and steady speed in combinations of 3, 5, or 7 swaras. The sound of the side-strings is interspersed in between the notes. The right hand and left-hand fingers must be used in a disciplined manner. It is a highly evolved technique. To master it, Vainikas of the older generation used to practise hundreds of 'chitta tanas' (composed Tanas) in Ghana Ragas like Nata, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali, Sri, Kedara, Reetigowla, Narayanagowla etc. Occasional interspersing of phrases in the higher speeds make the Tanas very lively. There are different varieties of Tanas like Gaja Tana, Mandooka Tana Ashwa, Tana, Shankha Tana, etc., which remind us of the movements of the respective animals. While playing Chakra Tana, the left hand fingers move on all the strings in a circular manner.

The Mysore Bani, on the whole, has a direct appeal and sustaining quality. It has been in vogue for the last 175 years — since the days of veena Venkatasubbiah, who was an Asthana Vidwan in the court of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. (19th century). It reached the acme of perfection in the hands of Vainika Sikhamani Seshanna of hallowed memory, who was the most celebrated amongst the vainikas of Mysore and enhanced the reputation of Mysore as a Veena centre. He believed that the scope of the veena would be constricted if confined purely to the vocal style. He and the other

vainikas of an earlier era felt that the potentialities of the instrument should be fully exploited by a judicious combination of the vocal and veena techniques in order to make a veena recital more sustaining and satisfactory. Seshanna made full use of the techniques mentioned in the Lakshna Granthas and added a few new ones too.

Veena Bakshi Subbanna, Seshanna's contemporary, adopted the vocal style as he was a disciple of Mysore Sadasiva Rao. Seshanna, being endowed with rich imagination, devoted a considerable portion of a concert to the creative aspects like Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi. His 'meettus' were so mature that one felt he was plucking the strings with a feather. He had a gift for 'Daatu-swara prayogas' like 'g-p-s-g, n-r-p-n, p-n-r-p, g-p-n-p' (Hamsadhvani) and used them without marring the beauty of the Raga. Ragas like Todi, Kalyani, Senchuruti and Khamas, when played by him had a flavour of their own — a Mysore flavour, if one may call it that. A sample of this flavour could be tasted in his famous Tillana in Senchuruti.

The Mysore Bani in veena existed in its purest form till about 45 years ago. Vainikas like my Guru Vainika Praveena Venkatagiriappa, Bhairavi Lakshminarayanappa and veena Shivaramaiah zealously guarded this style, in character and form. After their time, the Mysore Bani came under different influences as a result of which it lost its exclusive characteristics. The present Mysore Bani is more vocal oriented. In spite of these changes, traces of the old Mysore technique are noticeable to a large extent in some old timers still surviving. I feel that in today's context, it is better for each Bani to take some salient points from the other Banis and be the richer for it.

CULTURAL VIGNETTES

Kanchi Acharya's Blessings

The visit of Their Holiness Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamikal and Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamikal on Guruvaram, the 19th December 1991, was a red letter day for the Sabha.

Welcomed at the main entrance by the President and other Committee and Trust Board Members and the vast gathering of member-devotees, their Holiness were received with Poorna Kumbham and were led into the auditorium with Gurupranams when the Staff and students of the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya sang Dikshitar's Varakeertanai, "Brihaspathi". What thrilled the gathering was His Holiness Sri Jayendra Swamikal himself joining the chorus. It was a sublime and a benign occasion for "the temple of music, for music by music lovers" when Melody filled the environs.

In his benediction, His Holiness wished the Sabha well in its continued efforts at National Integration and Cultural Synthesis, for speedy restoration of the fire-ravaged Hall and early 'Kumbhabhishekam' of our Temple of Fine Arts.

Earlier the Sabha President Dr. V. Subramanian welcomed Their Holiness and sought their blessings. As a humble mite of the Sabha towards the construction of the Sanskrit University at Kanchi, a cheque for Rs. 10,000/- was presented to Their Holiness, on this auspicious occasion.



Call of the Hour

A forceful plea for the preservation of our cultural tradition, so that "posterity will not accuse us of negligence," was made by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Ms Jayalalitha. Inaugurating the 65th Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Madras, she, an artiste herself, said that the Scholars, Vidwans and experts had especially a greater role in preserving and passing on to the younger generation the best of our tradition.

SHANMUKHA has pleasure in excerpting below a report in this connection from *The Hindu*, Madras :

Referring to the evolution of music through the millennia, Ms Jayalalitha said the best musical traditions incorporated the characteristics of ethno-cultural influences prevailing in various parts of the country, and that led to the current forms of Indian

music. However, Indian music derived its inspiration from certain original ideologies and substances.

"Through the understanding of this oneness, Indian music can play and is playing a decisive role in underscoring the cultural and spiritual unity of the country. It is a tribute to Indian music that it has absorbed and assimilated diverse cultural patterns and made them its own. I would urge that this aspect of Indian music, its role as the unifying force in the cultural lives of our people, must be properly understood and highlighted, and not so much its ethno-cultural distinctions."

In the context of ancient cultural values, crumbling all over the world, it was all the more necessary to motivate the younger generation to carry on the mantle of the hoary tradition on their shoulders and enrich it by their own 'Manodharma' and innovativeness, she said.

Commending musical savants, connoisseurs and rasikas who had contributed to the maintenance of the highest standards of musical excellence, she said they had drawn the attention of the whole world to the fact that Indian music and dance forms represented the highest hall-mark of its culture and civilisation and were rooted in the understanding of the power and glory of divinity and its manifestation in countless forms.

The properties of Indian music were spiritual and encompassed religion, philosophy, logic, science, common-sense and sensory impressions. It spanned the entire gamut of organic sensation, sense perception, perceptual conception, reasoning, judgement and spiritual realisation. Indian music, therefore, was a refined and cultured system of the most comprehensive kind, encompassing all the aspects by which the ultimate could be realised, she said. In support of this she referred to a quotation which said, 'There is nothing to surpass singing (Gana) which is 10 million times superior to saying manthra (Japa) which in turn is 10 million times superior to meditation (Dhyana) which again is 10 million times superior to ritualistic worship (Pooja)'.

The greatest contribution of Indian music was the conceptualisation of ragas. The concept of raga constituted the vital force in the design and execution of the classical form of Indian music. 'I cannot but express a feeling of awe and wonder at the grandeur of the concept of Raga, which is the result of a thought process, and the combination of tone transformed into concrete forms and expressed with emotion and melody. I can only presume that ragas were the creation of a divine inspiration of the innermost being of the great Indian spiritual leaders wherever they lived, whether in the North or South, East or West'.

Citing from famous works including *Pura Naanooru*, *Pattinapalai*, *Silappadikaram*, *Thevaram* and *Thiruvagasam*, the Chief Minister said the contribution of the people of Tamil Nadu in the realm of music had been immense. The pinnacle of development of Tamil music was achieved during the time of Nayanmars and Alvars. The *Thevaram* hymns could be said to constitute the first regular musical compositions set in definite raga and thala. In Karnatak music, the Trinity, Swati Thirunal and other great savants had left behind a rich treasure of compositions which provided the grammar and meaning for the word 'Bhakthi'.

CONCERT TRADITION IN SOUTH INDIA

By

L. ANNAPOORNA

The unique feature of the South Indian Music system is its inimitable capacity to bring together two or more musicians on a concert platform. Though of a totally different mind and style, artistes perform together in unison. A musical blend results. That is the greatest concert tradition of Karnatak music. This tradition is just 200 and odd years old and has gained wide currency and has paled the musical culture of other systems of the Orient and the Occident. Today, Karnatak concert tradition has become the envy of the other systems as regards the advanced technique and style the concert artistes adopt and present. The article chronicles the traditional achievements in the concert pattern of the Karnatak music.

A concert may be defined as a performance by two or more musicians, vocal, instrumental, or both before an audience. Bharata states in his *Natya-sastra* that music concerts could be arranged for the following occasions :

1. coronations
2. weddings
3. festivals, household and temple.

Our Puranas make many references to music and music concerts. Two incidents may be mentioned to illustrate that the spirit of competition existed in the world of music even in ancient times.

The *Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam* relates an incident in which the musician Emanathan comes to the Pandya Kingdom to challenge the court musicians. Banabhadran of the Pandya court was afraid to face the northerner in the contest. Lord Siva, in order to save his devotee from ignominy, took the human form of a wood-cutter and carrying the bundle of firewood on his head, went to the residence of Emanathan and began to sing the Pan Saa-dari. Emanathan thrilled by the music, asked him who he was.

Periapuranam describes a very interesting episode. For one of his concerts young Thirugnyana Sambandan requested Tiruneelakanta Yazhpaanar for yazh accompaniment. The relatives of the latter expressed their opinion that the former's singing made an impress only because of the yazh accompaniment of the latter. This remark hurt the feelings of the Paanar who rushed to young Sambandan and requested : "Please sing today in such a way as to make it impossible for myself to accompany the music on the yazh. That will teach my relatives a lesson". Accordingly Sambandan sang the verse *Madhar Madapidiyin*. The Paanar could not reproduce it on his yazh. By this the artist in him came to the fore and he was very sorry and dejected about not being able to play the tune. Frustrated, he wanted to break the instrument. Sambandan stopped him and said, "Any voice is God-given whereas

your instrument is man-made. The instrument has its own limitations. Please continue to play." The melody subsequently came to be known as *Yazhmuripan* (Yazh breaker).

Ancient works on music in Sanskrit and Tamil deal elaborately with Raga Alapana. In the *Sangita Ratnakara*, Alapana is dealt with at great length as consisting of several stages like *Akshiptika*, *Vidaari* and *Makarini*. It mentions *Rupakalapti* in which a portion of a song is taken up for improvisation. This is called *Niraval* today. Tamil works such as *Pancha Marabu* also deal with *aalati* (Alapana). There are three kinds of *aalati* : 1. *Pan-aalati* 2. *Nira Aalati* 3. *Kaattaalati*.

Panaalati is Alapana of the Raga, *Nira-Aalati* is improvisation of the text of the song, and *Kaattaalati* is performed to the accompaniment of the dance. The latter two were performed within a rhythmic framework.

THE ORIGIN

Considering the enunciation of Nadaswaram music some decades ago, it could be said that vocal performances were also presented on the same lines, viz., elaborate Alapana of a particular raga followed by Tanam and Pallavi, after which a few pieces were sung.

The Tamil word for concert is 'cutcheri'. (This word also refers to a court or an office). Sometimes the word *Mela* is also used. It is derived from the root 'mil' (coming together). The Nadaswaram troupe consisting of two Nadaswarams, Ottu (drone), cymbals, and Thavil is referred to as *Periamelam* and the dance troupe comprising the dancer, Nattuvanar, Maddalam player,

Tutti (drone), Flute, Clarinet, etc., is referred to as *Chinnamelam*.

"Melam kattudal", striking a rapport between the performer and the listener, is essential for a concert. The prologue in a dance performance, sung for the creation of the right atmosphere, is called *Melaprapti*.

The term 'concert' is widely used to mean a 'cutcheri'. This is a misnomer. A concert means, first an agreement, or a union by mutual agreement; second, a musical entertainment in which a harmonic combination of voices or sounds is effected. Our system of music based on melody cannot provide a 'concert' as it is known in the West since harmonic arrangements of sounds are anathema to our system of music. Nor can we adopt the first meaning, as our concerts do not present a 'union by mutual agreement'. Sometimes there is neither union nor agreement among the performers. In such cases the concert becomes a disconcerting experience for the listener.

Silappadikaram, describes the music that accompanied the dance of Madhavi before the Chola King Karikala. The flute leads the music. Yazh (harp), Tannumai (drum) and Amantirikai (Idakkai) follow it closely. The Adiyarkku Nallar' commentary on *Silappadikaram* speaks of musical instruments under three categories :

1. Instruments which accompany vocal music (*Gittaanugam*).
2. Instruments which accompany dance (*Nrittaanugam*).
3. Instruments which accompany both (*Ubhayaanugam*).

The *Silappadikaram* refers to a number of songs such as *kaanalvari* sung by Kovalan and his lover to the accompaniment of the yazh. *Kuravai Paadal* sung by the cowherd women in Mullai Pan (Mohana Raga), and the *Vettuva vari* songs sung by the hunters. Although the texts of the songs are available, there are no clues as to how they were sung then.

The Tamil *Tevaram* hymns of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar (7th and 8th centuries A.D.) have fortunately been handed down to this day thanks to the Chola King Raja Raja I who ordained that these hymns be sung in all Saivite temples. Thus we have specimens of music which is more than 12 centuries old. These hymns were sung by a congregation of musicians called *Oduvars* and so, besides the *Thiruthandakam* and *Tiruvirutham*, a type of verse rendering, there was no scope for improvisation.

THE EVOLUTION

Between the 8th and the 15th centuries which saw the advent of Annamacharya (Telugu), Purandaradasa (Kannada), and Arunagirinathar (Tamil), the *Tiruvisaippa* of Kandaraditta Thevar and the *Tirupallandu* of Senthan Amudhanar are the only Tamil compositions worth mentioning.

It must be pointed out that the Vaishnavite Alvars also composed four thousand exquisite Tamil hymns set to different Panns like the *Tevaram* hymns. Though their music is lost, the chanting of the hymns in temples had been modelled after Vedic chant.

From the 15th century onwards, Tanjavur came under the sway of the

Telugu Nayaks and later the Maratha rulers. Tamil lost its exalted place as the Telugu language came to be patronised by the Nayaks. It was during Vijayaraghava Nayak's time that the great Kshetrappa composed hundreds of his Padams in Telegu. Narayana Tirtha, another Telugu who migrated from Andhra to Varahur, composed his *Krishna Leela Tarangini* in Sanskrit. Tyagaraja whose ancestors had migrated from Andhra to Tiruvaiyaru composed hundreds of songs in Telugu, his mother tongue. The Tanjavur court patronised about three hundred musicians, most of them being of Telugu origin. Pachimiriam Adippaiah, the author of the Bhiravi varnam and the Guru of Syama Sastri, and Pallavi Gopaliah had honoured place in the Tanjavur Court. Sonti Venkata Subbiah, the father of Sonti Venkataramanaiah and the guru of Tyagaraja was the chief court musician. It is said that each of the musicians had to perform one day in the year. The Sangita Mahal attached to the Tanjavur Palace was the venue for such concerts.

Tyagaraja's disciple Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar has mentioned the concert given by Tyagaraja before his guru. He reports that Tyagaraja performed the alapana of Bilahari and then sang his own song *Dorakuna* followed by *Niraval* and *Kalpana swaras* in one of the Charanams.

It may be mentioned that Pachimiriam Adippaiah is believed to have established the practice of Pallavi singing, a purely improvisational rendition of a text, a stance, set to a particular raga and *tala*. The word "Pallavi" itself is said to represent 'pa' meaning pada or words, 'la' standing for 'laya' or rhythmic framework and 'vi' representing vinyasam or elaboration.

Before the compositions of the Trinity gained wide popularity South Indian music was predominantly Raga Pradhanya, with importance given to the elaboration of the melodic framework, very much like the North Indian music of today. Lyrics were given importance only in the *Bhajana Sampradaya*. Such a tradition naturally gave prominence to the hours-long elaboration of the Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi. The fact that the term Pallavi was prefixed to the names of great vidwans such as Gopala Iyer, Sesha Iyer, and Narasimha Iyer indicates that this was the most important part of a concert, the test of a musician's worth.

The *Bhajana* tradition which was established in the 15th century in Tamil Nadu gradually began to use Chinnai-ah's composition, the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva, the Tarangams of Narayana Tirtha, and the devotional songs of Bhadrachala Ramadas. It may be pointed out that there were recitals exclusively of the Tiruppugazh songs of Arunagiri Nathar and of the Ramanataka Kiritanas of Arunchala Kavi. In these concerts there was little scope for improvisation. Even Padam and Javali figured exclusively in some concerts.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

It may be interesting to note that the flute and the yazh were used to provide accompaniment to vocal music. The veena and the Jalatarangam were also used in this manner. But after the advent of Violin in early 19th century, all other accompanying instruments were replaced by it.

Tradition is not a dead fossil of the past but a continuity of it, adjusting to the needs of the times. Otherwise, it

ceases to maintain the living quality. Its validity is proven by the discovery of its moorings in the early ages of human history.

TRADITION

Modern classical concert music is an instance in point. The norms and parts which make up the present day concert are the growth of such basic elements and components that were born as early as a thousand years ago. To provide a few instances, the Raga, the soul of our music, is a lyrical and historical development from the "Jatis" dating from the 7th or 8th century A.D. Swaraprastara seems to have existed as early as or even earlier than the 13th century A.D. Both the *Sangita Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva and the later *Ragavibodha* of Somanatha mention swara "Varisais" or "Alankaras" about sixty in number, which were still quite aesthetically pleasing and interesting, judged by modern standards.

"Kootatanam" as opposed to "Sudhasadhanam" is Swaraprastara in Vakra order. Tanam singing of the modern type in which Raga phrases are sung to madhyama kala with specified aksharas seems to be only three hundred to four hundred years old. Again, Pallavi singing has been hinted at and vaguely described in the words "Roopakalapati" in the *Sangita Ratnakara*.

MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

Between the post-Ratnakara period, when the Indian music system seems to have bifurcated into the Southern and Northern systems, and the 18th century, the 72 Melakartas with their enormous possibilities for the creation of innumerable Janya Ragas had been

propounded and exploited. The theory of the music of the South had been promulgated in all its elaborations and detail. Purandaradasa had laid secure foundations of our music with his Alankaram, Geetham and Sooladhis, not to speak of thousands of his Padas. Lakshana Geethams for many Ragas had been composed by Venkatamakhi and others. The ground had been thoroughly prepared for the flowering of men of genius like the South Indian Trinity who appeared on the firmament of music and lit our continent with their celestial compositions.

The Kirti in its embryo form in the *Geeta Govinda* was developed by the Tallapakkam composers followed by Bhadrachala Ramdas and others and reached its full maturity in the compositions of Sri Tyagaraja, Syama Sastri, and Dikshitar.

CHAMBER CONCERT

Private and royal patronage of music enriched the period producing great composers, and great performers. Propagation of music among the masses too was taken care of. In the pre-Tyagaraja period, concerts were held mostly in royal darbars and chambers of Zamindars, where only a chosen few were privileged to listen to classical music. The concert which then lasted for two hours or more gave predominance to Raga elaboration followed by Pallavi. Musical history has it that musical contests were held in the royal courts. Nagaswaram, the most effective instrument for the propagation of classical music among the masses, became the medium through which large sections of the public were gradually acquainted with many *prasiddha* Ragas

and Talas on the occasions of royal festivities and Temple Utsavas.

Thus it could be well seen that all the "material" for the structure of modern concerts, save kirti existed in the Tyagaraja period. The early forms of music such as Tayams, Prabandhams etc., were swept away by the advent of the Kirti. But their spirit continued to live in the varieties of the Kirti composed by the Trinity. Dikshitar's Kritis are *prabandha* in spirit, those of Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri are Kavya. Kalpana Sangita which was until then only confined to *Ragam* and *Pallavi*, could now be sung through the interpretation of various types of compositions.

Ample opportunities were afforded to artistes in chamber concerts at royal palaces and zamindars' houses for exhibiting their individual artistic talents. The adaptation of the modern violin, to Indian music as a solo and accompanying instruments gave a fillip to the concert presentations and it entrenched itself as the accompaniment when the concert emerged from the private chambers into the public auditoria. With the increasing patronage of music by public and private audiences, musicians were encouraged to pursue the art as a career. The performer as such had to enlarge his stock and repertoire. Unalloyed interpretative music was found inadequate to meet the increasing demands of the public. The performer had to include recitative portions in the concert before and after the Ragas, Tanam and Pallavi.

The post-Tyagaraja period saw a number of compositions like Javalis, Tillanas, etc., which met the needs of the performing musicians in this respect. The large volume of composi-

tions of the Trinity came in at a very strategic and psychological moment in history. These compositions afforded unprecedented scope for the display of individual talent in the pieces themselves as well as in the Raga prologues and the Niraval and Swara improvisations. They were also of such a wide variety to suit the varying musical temperaments and equipments of many talented and gifted musicians and the various grades of the fast-growing public interest in music.

It was in this way that the two major aspects, the determinate and indeterminate (the recitative and the interpretative) became the warp and woof of the texture of the modern concert. The modern concert emerged as a well thought-out arrangement in the presentation of classical music in both these aspects. The concert could be divided into three segments : (1) the pre-Pallavi segment; (2) the Raga-Tanam-Pallavi; and (3) the post-Pallavi, a comparatively lighter, segment. The pre-Pallavi segment is a mixture of recitative and interpretative session. From the opening Varnam, through Kritis fast and slow paced alternating with short and elaborate Raga prologue befitting the Kritis the classical atmosphere was gradually heightened, culminating in the second segment of Ragam-Tanam and Pallavi, which is the high-water-mark of South Indian classical music. It is the peak of the concert. From the Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi to the end of the performance, there is a gradual watering down of classical music through light classical and light music, so that at the end, even non-classical folk and Hindustani melodies fit naturally into the pattern of the concert.

There is a significance in the sequence followed. In the pre-Pallavi portion, in the rendering of each piece, the succession of the Ragam, Kriti, Niraval and Swara have a significance. From

Raga to Kriti, to Niraval and to Swara improvisation there is a graded, emergence of and an emphasis on the aspect of Laya.

The instruments used in a vocal concert in addition to the singer, are the *tambura*, the *violin*, and the *mridangam*. Many concerts include *upa-pakkavad-yams* such as the *ghatam* and the *kanjira*. Karnatak music offers a greater variety in instrumental ensembles such as the violin, flute, and veena combination,, orchestral presentations such as the Vadyavrinnda of All India Radio and Talavadya cutcheries of different kinds of percussion instruments. In addition Jugal bandhis featuring instrumentalists and vocalists of Hindustani and Karnatak music have been popular. And yet no one has yet surpassed Kanjeevaram Naina Pillai of yesteryears with his fantastic array of sidemen, providing the so-called "full-bench" concert fare with the Violin, Mridangam, Kanjira, Dholak, Ghatam, Morsing and Konnakol (vocalising of the rhythmic syllables).

Though most of the composers in Karnatak music were born in the Tanjavur district, musicians in Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka were also responsible for keeping the flag of the music aloft. Many princes in Andhra like those of Karvetnagar, Vijayanagar, Bobbili and Pithapuram patronised music. Parupalli Rama Krishnayya Pantulu, Veena Venkataramana Das, Sangameswara Sastri and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu were all names to reckon with.

In the Mysore court a great galaxy of musicians such as Sadasiva Rao, Veena Seshanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, Vasudevachar, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Tiger Varadachariar and Chowdaiah flourished. Trivandrum and Cochin patronised musicians. Noorani Parameswara Bhagavatar, Vadivelu, Coim-

batore Raghava Iyer, Palghat Anantharama Bhagavatar, Rama Bhagavatar, Veena Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Palghat Mani Iyer, among others did great service in propagating the Karnatak music.

Though the music of the south is at least 2000 years old, the Cutcheri Pad-dhati has been established only in the last two centuries and the pioneers of this format were Mahavaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramaniya Iyer, Kone-rirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, Ramnad Srinivas Iyengar and Madurai Pushpa-vanam. Musicians who have contributed in no small measure to the formulation of the modern concert tradition are Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Chittoor Subramania Pillai, the Karaikudi Veena brothers, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Flute Sanjiva Rao, Flute Swaminatha Pillai, Flute Mali, Jalatarangam Subba Iyer, G. N. Balasubramaniam and Madurai Mani Iyer. Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar deserves special mention for the planning, execution and balance of his Cutcheris.

The present day concert, despite changes having taken place, has its root in the post-Trinity era. The enormous

music compositions in different format and structure, have helped the present day musicians to shape their concerts in such a way as to please varying aesthetic levels of the audience. Today's concert stages are packed to full because of the liveliness provided by super musicians like Sem-mangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Smt. M. S. Sub-bulakshmi, D. K. Pattammal, Maharaja-puram Santhanam, K. J. Jesudas, T. N. Seshagopalan, T. V. Sankaranarayan, Chitti Babu, Balamurali Krishna, E. Gayatri, Ravi Kiran and Mandolin U. Srinivas.

There are several talented young musicians who are forging steadily on the concert arena. They all deserve encouragement for their efforts in maintaining the high standards of Karnatak Music alive.

Our concert tradition has thus come to stay. It will however be good to remind ourselves that all art is great to the extent that it is informed of the spirit, noble in content, harmonious in its parts, and elegant in presentation. We should not allow this great heritage to disintegrate into the empty aesthetic formalism and uninspired technique and showmanship, which inordinate and indiscriminate commercialization of any art is likely to bring in its wake.

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Kathak-Origin, Development and Gharanas

By

DAMAYANTI JOSHI

Kathak means a school of dance. It is also the name of a community of dancers. The word sounds simple. But it has a history. Which throws much light on the position of classical dance in the North.

In ancient times, the knowledge of epics was conveyed to the people by certain classes of professional storytellers, named Kathakas, Granthikas, Gathakas, Pathakas etc. The medium resorted to by them was art, especially narration, music and dance. Sage Valmiki in the *Ramayana* gives some indication of a class of rhapsodists and reciters who specialised in the art of story-telling. The rendering of the *Ramayana* by Lava and Kusha as Kushilavas may be cited as an example.

A DISTINCT ARTFORM

While the word Kathaka is mentioned as such in the Sanskrit literary works starting from the *Mahabharata*, it is named as Kahuga in the Jain works like the *Aupapadika Sootra* and *Kalpa Sutra* and is used in the same sense. It occurs in the *Brahmamahapurana*, referring to the category of actors, singers and dancers. As a class of storytellers, Kathakas are said to have flourished in Bengal. Vidyapati, the dominant force of Medieval Vaishnavism in Bengal and Assam, had a music companion, Jayat who, it is said, was a Kathaka. And Tulsidas, the author of *Hindi Ramayana*, has referred to Kathak in his *Vinayapatrika* as conveying the sense of dance.

Although Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism were prevalent simultaneously and the literary works pertaining to them were written in different languages, certain social and cultural patterns and trends of art and literature were common to all the three religions. The words, therefore, pointed to the same institutions and conditions.

Katha as narration was then a distinct form of composition intended for use by rhapsodists and reciters. As such it had music and dance with Abhinaya among the features of its technique. Knowledge was thus conveyed to the people in a vivid and entertaining manner. The Kathakas have been known through centuries as a community of dancers and musicians. It is, therefore, not unlikely that their dance recital came to be styled as Kathak by virtue of its association with this community.

DANCE STYLE & FORM

This brings us to the position of dance in the North. Music, (Sangeet), as defined in the ancient treatises, is a composite art consisting of singing, playing and dancing. Numerous patterns of 'Desis' (folk music) seem to have dancing as their integral part. The development of classical music has proceeded on similar lines, carrying dance with it throughout its course.

The performances narrated in the *Harivamsha* were presumably dance-

dramas, because they are stated to have been danced and above all stands the Raas of Krishna, vividly portrayed in the *Bhagavata Purana*.

"Hallishaka", "Raas" and "Charchari" or "Natyarasaka" are classical forms. Their technique was governed by the fundamentals and principles laid down in the *Natya Shastra*. The dance presented in the temple or court was in classical technique, irrespective of the communal or sectarian affiliations of the dancer.

Now the point which has to be considered is what type of dance it could have been which is referred to in the 'forms' quoted above and also mentioned in other literary sources? Or, what were the technique of dance when it was performed by the Kathakas and other artistes, during the centuries?

Certainly such dance was classical in type as it followed Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, which was the fount of inspiration for all classical schools of dance, irrespective of their regional distinctions and an authority.

Dancing, introduced as a sequence in the literary compositions of the past, should not be taken merely as a decorative aside. It had an equally important function. Whether the form of classical dance that has survived in the North represents the classical tradition continuously from the past is not certain. But this tradition, rich, varied and resourceful was elaborated as a style for a long time and had been called Kathak in various periods.

VAISHNAVISM & KATHAK

As a community of dancers, the Kathakas seem to have gained greater

prominence following the advent of the Mughal rule. It does not mean that they did not enjoy patronage earlier. In this respect, the notion held by some that there was almost nothing of art, especially music and dance, before the advent of the Mughal rulers, needs to be corrected. On the contrary, it was the age when Vaishnavism had already established a vast spiritual empire of its own, and had upheld the best traditions of music, dance, poetry, literature and painting, because it was fully alive to the values of creative art and had adopted it as a medium for worship and devotion.

Krishna and Radha are the presiding deities of Vaishnavism. The precious art heritage of Vaishnavism was built up on the basis of the Leelas of Krishna, during the Rajasthani — Mughal period. The Krishna Leela, though it was brought out in high relief by the Vaishnavism at this later age, had its origin in the remote past, and it could be traced back to the age of the Mahabharata and of Bhasa.

Vaishnavism gained its enormous popularity, because it was interpreted to the people through their own languages and through the medium of music, dance and drama. It was also the religion in which the scenes of the various Krishna Leelas were depicted and the dance which flourished under its impetus was pure Kathak in style, technique and forms.

As for music, Keertanas, mostly in Braja Bhasha, made a resourceful musical heritage of the North built by saints like Swami Haridas, Vallabhacharya and his followers like Kumbhadas, Govinddas, Nandadas, etc. These Keertanas formed an important part of

Hindustani music, and served as a great source for Dhruvpad and Dhamar. They, moreover, threw light on the conditions of art, culture and dance. In short it was a golden period of Dhruvpad and Keertan in music and Kathak in dance.

The Keertanas were sung as a part of worship in the temples by the Keertana Mandallis. They were danced and interpreted by the Raasa Mandalis. Both the Keertana and Raasa Mandalis are functioning to this day as traditional institutions.

The Kathak dance comprises like other classical dance forms Nritya, Nritya and Natya. The view held by some that it has no Abhinaya has no validity for it has wide range of Bhava Darshana. In the language of Braja and Kathak, Abhinaya is known by the similar word Bhava.

The foot movement is implicit in the conception of the dance art. The varieties of the gaits and rhythmic patterns of movement are dependent upon the feet. The Kathak dance simply emphasises the beauty of footwork as an equal part of the technique. It has not overdone the foot movement. Perhaps the wrong notion of ascribing Kathak's prominence to Moghul courts has much to do with detaching the Kathak from its religious backgrounds and its original musical score of Dhruvpad and Keertan.

GHARANAS

The development of Gharanas of Kathak and its entry into the courts of both Hindu and Muslim rulers are inter-related. There are primarily two

Gharanas of Kathak, viz., the Lucknow and the Jaipur. As no written records have been maintained, it is difficult to verify the stories narrated. The Lucknow Gharana of Kathak came into existence about the beginning of the 19th century. It matured and shaped itself to become a plausibly individualistic art during the time of the last Nawab of Oudh.

LUCKNOW GHARANA

About the beginning of the 19th century, during the reign of Asaf-ud-Daulah, one Prakashji migrated to Lucknow and enlisted himself as a dancer in the Nawab's service and laid the foundation of the Lucknow Gharana. It is common presumption that Prakashji and his son Thakur Prasad belonged to Handia, a village in the district of Allahabad, but it is also held in some quarters that they belonged to Rajasthan and came from the village of Jaiatna in Jodhpur State. Whatever the place they hailed from, the important fact is that with the coming of these masters, both of whom apparently were Kathak masters of Raasdhari tradition, the Lucknow Gharana came into vogue. Thakur Prasad had a brother, Durga Prasad, who also served for sometime in the court of Lucknow.

Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the last Oudh ruler, became the disciple of Thakur Prasad and is said to have had so much respect for his Guru that he is said to have seated him next to himself in his Court. Apart from being a dancer and a preceptor, Thakur Prasad was also a scholar and it is said that he wrote a treatise on dance which was, unfortunately, destroyed by a fire in his house. Thakur Prasad was suc-

ceeded by Durga Prasad's three sons, Binda Din, and Kalka Prasad and Bhairon Prasad. Two of these, Binda Din and Kalka Prasad, continued to serve in Wajid Ali's Court and turned a new leaf in the history of Kathak, while not much is known about Bhairon Prasad.

NEW SHEEN

Binda Din and Kalka Prasad were inseparable, and whatever greatness and beauty the Lucknow Gharana of Kathak has today are largely due to the contributions these two luminaries made. Both were dancers and teachers. But Binda Din being gifted with poetic leanings, proved himself to be an outstanding composer too. And Kalka Prasad's speciality lay in the mastery of rhythm. Little wonder that the two brothers pooling their talents created a style of Kathak which was at once lyrical and lilting. They added a new sheen to Kathak.

Binda Din introduced several new elements into the art of dance which was, so to speak, bequeathed to him by his uncle, and he also added a number of new items to the repertory. He composed scores of Thumris, Dadras and Bhajans and these have become an integral part of the Nritya content of Kathak. He built his own house at Lucknow and also a temple dedicated to Bhaironji. He died issueless and with this the Lucknow School of Kathak lost, what may appropriately be called, its chief architect.

Kalka Prasad, who was an inimitable tabla player and specialised in Layakari, died few years earlier. But his three sons, Jagannath Prasad, (Achan Maharaj), Baijnath Misra (Lachchu Maharaj), and Shambhu Maharaj, all of whom were trained in dance by their worthy uncle, Binda Din, held the torch aloft.

In so meticulously nurtured Gharana Bhava became the forte. The masters analysed human emotions and evolved a very effective mode of expressional dance. They regarded the face as the supreme medium of expression and eyes, in particular, as the mirror of emotion. Mukhabhinaya and Netrabhinaya became the core of their style. Even the subtlest nuances of emotion was capable of expression, and each nuance in a number of ways. This paved the way for the incorporation of Sanchari Bhava in the Nritya of Kathak and it eventually became one of the predominant features of the Lucknow Gharana.

JAIPUR GHARANA

The other is the Jaipur Gharana the contribution of which to the preservation and spread of Kathak is considerable. This Gharana has prospered essentially under the patronage of Rajasthan States and produced great masters like Nathuranji, Bhanuji, Hanuman Prasad, Hari Prasad, Jai Lalji, Sunder Prasadji, Narayan Prasad, etc. The characteristics of this Gharana is austerity and virility. The representatives of Jaipur Gharana extend all over the country and can justly claim to have initiated a great number of pupils into the subtleties of Kathak dance.

Raigarh was a sizable State in the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, and its ruler, Raja Chakradhar Singh, had one passion in life — that is Kathak. He was also interested in Tabla and Pakhawaj and in the musical forms of Dhruvpad and Dhamar. As long as he ruled, Chakradhar Singh spent every day of his life in an atmosphere saturated with dance and music. He engaged the best available Vidwans to teach him Kathak, the Pakhawaj and Tabla, and invited experts from all

over the country to perform at his court. Of the various Kathak dancers who served at his court at Raigarh, the foremost were Jailal and Achchan Maharaj.

There was almost a period of lull, or call it a decay, if you will, in the history of Kathak during the last phase of the Mughal rule and the rising of the British Raj. The decay was more due to the Raj's aversion to the 'nautch' (as they called it) at the durbar or private 'mehlis'. But Kathak's classical vitality was never impaired as the artform was still nurtured with care and dedication by families which had been the repository of the artform for generations and centuries. And with the phase of renaissance its revival with greater strength became much easier.

In the 'thirties came Madame Menaka on the horizon of Kathak. She came from a Kuleen Bengali Brahmin family and was attracted towards the art of Kathak when Kathak had fallen into disrepute and girls from high families were not allowed to learn it. However due to the encouragement of her husband, Maj. General Sir Sahib Singh Sokhey (a scientist and the first Indian Director of Haikine Institute), Menaka nee Leila Sokhey, learnt the art from the great masters of Lucknow Gharana, Pt. Sitaram Prasad, Lachchu Maharaj and Ramdutt Misra who helped her establish an institution of Kathak and run it as a 'Gurukul'.

From temples to the courts and thence to the proscenium stage it was a sea change in the manner of presentation. Menaka realised that Kathak to be presented on the proscenium stage would have to be conceived and presented differently. Her mind was attracted towards the Natya form of Kathak, i.e., the Raas Leela. She had

already watched the choreography of the Russian Ballet and made a study of it in Europe. Though trained in solo, Kathak as a solo dance form did not attract her much. Her mind was set on ballets and group dance. She became the first person to introduce Ballets through the technique of Kathak and also first to tour all over Europe, S. E. Asia and other countries with her Kathak troupe. She put Kathak on the world map. Not only that, her's was the only Indian Troupe to have been invited to participate in the Olympiad Dance Competition held at Berlin in 1936 and won the first three prizes for India in the tough International competition.

Kathak has since come a long way, from Gurukul to institutions. In the post-Independence era many 'Kendras' were established with the traditional Gurus at the helm, imparting training. Maris College, Lucknow, Prayag Sangit Samiti, Allahabad, were two of the early institutions to take up teaching Kathak though they have not made great strides.

Sometime in 1954 Kathak was introduced at the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, Delhi with Shambu Maharaj as its Guru. Later on, in the 'sixties it delinked from the parent institution and became a full-fledged Kathak Kendra with scholarship incentives etc., to students and has today carved a niche for itself.

In early seventies, 1972 to be precise, Lachu Maharaj started a Kathak Kendra at Lucknow which flourished till his death in 1978. After a period of uncertainty it was again put on a firm footing a few years ago.

Kathak Kendras have been set up at Jaipur and Bhopal, the latter aided by the Madhya Pradesh Government, for propagating Jaipur Gharana. The progress has to be watched.

MUSIC, THAT IS DHARMA, KEERTI

By
Nedunuri KRISHNAMURTHY

(Excerpts from the Presidential Address at the 65th Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Madras)

Paying his pranmas to the Almighty Lord Venkateswara, the Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, his parents Ramamurthy and Vijayalakshmi who blessed him with "Brahmopadesa and Sangeethopadesa respectively in his childhood, his Gurus Dwaram Narasinga Rao Naidu, and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. S. Pinakapani and praising the yeoman service the Music Academy has been doing to the cause of music, its unique "moral, financial, academic and educational support" and the opportunities it opened up to the upcoming artistes, Nedunuri proceeded with his speech in a tone of a plea — making some pertinent suggestion "for consideration and follow-up action." The Excerpts :

"Music is the highest form in the concept of evolution. It is the only discipline, a function of art, science and philosophy, which can provide peace, sanctity, heavenly bliss and salvation to struggling mortals. It is Dharma, it is keerti. All others are asthiram.

Asthiram Jeevita Loke

Asthire Dhana Yavvane

Asthira Putra Dharaascha

Dharma Keerti Dwayam Sthiram

It is not only our responsibility but also our duty that music, particularly, Classical Karnatak Music is safeguarded, protected and remains unpolluted.

TRIBUTES TO TRINITY

Aesthetic grace, excellent style, technical elegance, rhythmic accuracy and captivating melody are the essential qualities of our South Indian Music. The Trinity's compositions are gold mines of the above outstanding features. It is in these compositions that the essence of Manodharma Sangeeta is also embedded. The ability of the artist lies in unearthing these fine aspects from their compositions.

I am afraid, most of the invaluable treasures of Trinity's works, at present are not in active circulation. Many standard compositions are not heard in the present day concerts. I wish the Academy evinces keen interest in collecting authentic versions of all the compositions of the Trinity and preserving them for the future generation preferably in cassette media.

RAGAM, TANAM, NERAVAL AND RTP

Manodharma is altogether different from set music, because Manodharma needs a creative and scientific approach. Study of music should be art-based. The ultimate goal of raga is exalted aesthetics. Raga is the soul of our music and kriti, the vehicle. Every raga has its own form and design, which we call *Swaroopam*. To attain this objective, we must strive hard and make a special study; otherwise the emotional content will not be there. Tanam, a divine expression of endless-

ness — Ananta — is not enjoying its place in recent years. It is either omitted totally or is given minor importance, this applies to Niraval also. Both need revival in full strength."

Incidentally, the observation Nedunuri made about the concert-duration may be cited here :

"Connoisseurs of music have a feeling that the highly evolved and creative aspects of music are fading out, of late, for one reason or the other. One such important branch of creative music is Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi, which provides ample scope for displaying performers' skill, creative ability, artistic splendour, musical wisdom and rhythmic allotropy. To do justification for this item, the duration of the concert should be at least three hours, if not more. Excuses to reduce the duration are not found as acceptable reasons.

REPOSITORY OF MANODHARMA

Varnas are the repositories of Manodharma Sangeeta. These are the best examples of applied music. I appeal to the teaching communities to give maximum importance to this item, for the benefit of the students. It is this discipline which helps in voice culture. An Ata-Tala Varnam rendered in two speeds correctly, is by itself, a Himalayan exercise. Besides, the Chitta Swaras built in the Varnam are an ideal guide in developing the faculty of Kalpanaswara.

Vocal artists should be well acquainted with at least one instrument, preferably stringed, so that they can comprehend swara modulations distinctly. Knowledge of percussion instruments helps a lot to bring out the academic

aspects of rhythmic orientations perfectly and precisely.

NEED FOR MUSICOLOGY

Knowledge of musicology is essential to attain perfection in performing arts. Besides, one must know the meaning of the song to bring out the *bhava* and to convey the message of the song. This Academy should explore the possibility of implementing this essential aspect by suitable means.

PANCHARATNAS

Pancharatnas are full of poetic excellence, musical awareness and philosophical deliberation. They are outstanding examples of Swarakalpana and Tanam. These Pancharatna keertanas need careful handling, maintaining their dignity and sanctity.

REVERENCE TOWARDS SENIORS

The very ability of an artist to sustain himself as an eminent performing artist for a quarter of a century, qualifies him for the star value in the galaxy of senior vidwans. They are repositories of the traditional heritage which the youngsters should inherit in their own interest for a bright and prosperous academic future. They should be the dependable custodians to transmit it intact to the future generations. This is my Brahmopadeso to my younger brethren. Instead of bringing down the standard of music to the *pamara* level, the artiste should elevate the *rasika* to the *pandita* level or the knowledgeable *rasika*.

DEVOTIONAL MUSIC

Our temples are Rangasthalas (Cultural stages) from time immemorial for

propagation of our cultural heritage. It is most appropriate at this juncture to offer my respectful regards to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, for her scheme of taking up the renovation of temples to inspire the divine wisdom. *Sangeeta Gnanamu Bhaktivina Sanmargamu Galade Manasa*. We have a huge treasure of devotional music of saint composers, which should be popularised through temples. On behalf of the musical fraternity I appeal to the Hon'ble Chief Minister who by herself is an eminent artist, to revive the past glory of our culture, I wish the routine domestic rituals at home also start with devotional music. Parents and elders in the family have a big role to play here.

MUSIC, NOT MERE SONGS

I firmly believe that the ancient system of residential schooling known as Gurukula Sampradaya is the best and most effective media of transmission of musical wisdom for professional eminence. The student should devote his full time usefully for learning, *sadhana* and listening to good music for better results. Today we teach only songs; we do not teach music.

Much has been talked about the dwindling number of *rasikas* in a concert. While the platitude that Karnatak music is divine and that it will always survive is well enough a conviction, the fact remains that platitudes by themselves do not fetch much. It has proved very difficult to pull a listener to a concert. On the contrary, cheap entertainment lures him.

Satyam Janavirodhaya
Asatyam Janaranjakam
Sura Vikrayate sthanaha
Dadhi Kshiram Gruhe Gruhe

Solutions to solve this predicament are not that easy. The faculty of listening to Karnatak Music must be cultivated at a very early stage. Schools, particularly those for girls, must have a separate period every day for music alone. Constant dinning of classical music generates a taste for it. The healthy results of this exercise is not only development of talent but also a useful and purposeful diversion from the unrest and indiscipline of the present day youth.

TO UPCOMING ARTISTS

The success of a student depends upon the selection of a Guru who can guide properly. Traditional values are to be respected to achieve higher targets. Keeping this in mind, an eminent exponent should be chosen as the Guru. Any mistake in this regard is likely to affect the career prospects adversely of the promising students; proper foundation is vital. Besides untiring efforts to cultivate *swaragnana*, the faculty of writing notation, grasping and improving *raga gnana* lead to ascendancy in one's career.

ROLE OF SPONSORS

It is observed that no norms are followed in sponsoring artists to reputed sabhas. There is a feeling that some are gaining access prematurely, while others, though deserving, are not encouraged. To get over this injustice, screening committees may be formed at important regions to select the worthy. Office bearers of sabha may be co-opted to make it a success. It is also observed that with inadequate training, some upcoming artists get premature exposure and get exposed for no fault of theirs. The teaching community and

the sponsors should take proper care in introducing upcoming artists to the platform, more so to the reputed sabhas. Honest and sincere approach by all concerned in this regard will be a commendable service to the cause of talented youth. Merit should be the sole criterion in the selection of the artists.

MEDIA & SABHAS

These days generally speaking, the attendance in the sabhas is not encouraging. It is necessary to identify the reasons. I personally feel that it is time that sabhas organised lecture demonstrations and appreciation classes to appreciate the art and science of music. This will certainly go a long way in educating the rasika.

Even though T.V. is a powerful medium, its contribution to classical music is hardly appreciable when compared to the audio medium, the A.I.R. The time allotted for National Programme of

music over AIR is 90 minutes, whereas it is just 30 minutes over T.V. It should be extended at least to 60 minutes. Similar encouragement should be offered to dance.

REVIVAL OF DECLINING ARTS

While in the faculties of vocal music, violin and percussion, the number of artists is on the increase, there has been a downward trend in some important instruments like Nagaswaram, Veena and Flute. This Academy and other institutions must see that they also survive and progress.

RECORDED CASSETTES

Release of pre-recorded cassettes of all sorts has reached epidemic proportions. The music lover is at a loss to identify what is good and what is not. Great music can be enjoyed only live. The RASABHAVA and ANUBHUTI can be realised only in live concert and not through cassettes.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF ?

"The Carnatic music scene was changing. There was a tendency to go easy on the Pallavi as the piece de resistance of concerts. Rather than Ghana ragas, artists were beginning to favour new ones in their mode — like Kathanakuthohalam, Bahudari, Charukesi, Hindolam and Hindola-Vasantham.

"C. R. Srinivasa Aiyengar wrote about these tendencies and decried also the 'disappearance of the Varna element.' He said further :

"We are obsessed and the professionals likewise with the inevitable opening shots from the big guns. Pachimiriam Adiyappayya's Varna in Bhairavi is a master-piece indeed, as also the Dikshitar Keerthana in Hamsadwani. But you cannot have them for lunch, for dinner, for supper, for your bed and board."

"The author was sorry on the one hand that the Varna was not getting its due and on the other when it did figure, no variety was provided."

—The Hindu of 23.3.1982 quoting "The World that Was" (17 to 23 May, 1932)

DEVELOPING TALENTS—ROLE OF PARENTS

By

P. G. KRISHNAMOORTHY

Sometime during 1967, an off chance remark by an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sayee Baba about the deteriorating behavioral standards of students in general, brought forth this remark from the Baba :

"Look at the fan above your head. It has three blades. Likewise, in moulding the character and behaviour of students, there are three forces influencing, namely, the parent, the teacher and the student. Why blame the student alone? Why not examine whether the other two are functioning properly?"

The problem could not have been more correctly and effectively stated. At the same time the solution had also been clearly indicated.

For the sake of immediate relevance, I am confining my observations to the field of music. The other day the proud parent of a young artiste, was singing the praise of his child who had performed in a series of concerts for encouraging youngsters. He said it was the best in the series and that it would have been superb if only the accompanists had been seasoned vidwans. I too had listened to this concert along with two friends who were accomplished artistes. The performer had frequently gone off 'sruthi' and he had no sense of proportion or time sense with the result that the kutcheri was dragging on. In contrast, another artiste carried the day with simple, straight and pleasing pieces. In the first case, if the artiste had failed, a good part of the

blame should, in my opinion, squarely rest with the parent. I do not know how much the parent knew about music but he was often asking me to go over to his house to hear his child, which I could not. So once I asked him to lend me a cassette containing his child's concert. He promptly asked me "Are you sure that your record player is good? Otherwise the sweet music will be distorted." Well! I was totally bowled over.

There was another occasion when a parent caught hold of me in the midst of a performance which I was really enjoying, only to complain that his son was the victim of partiality of the judges at a competition. "Sir," he said, "do you know that at this competition only the disciples of so and so are given the first prize? No merit is recognised if the candidate is learning from someone else." He said the boy was specially coached by his teacher for the competition. I was present at the competition and the winner was head and shoulders above the others. Why does this happen?

DISCOVERY OF TALENT

My own feeling is that many parents do not have much of an ear for music and exaggerate the talents which, they often feel, exists in their children. This may not be true in all cases. Sri Pailghat Mani Iyer once said,

"For a short time after birth one does not find much of a difference between the off-

spring of donkeys and horses. They almost look alike. It is only when they grow up that the differences become perceptible."

Sri Mani Iyer used to say that parents should be able to distinguish between the passing fancy and real inner craving for anything in their children. A child extends its hands towards anything it sees. Once it sees something else, it drops the toy or object it has been holding and goes towards the new one. Where is the point in deciding that it has a talent or craving for the first one or even the second one? Let the child show consistent liking for anything and see its reactions when you give it or take away the object. If the parent on the slightest evidence of a child's fancy for an instrument construes that it has a liking for it and puts somebody to coach up, this leads to frustration soon if the child really does not take to the line. Often a parent decides that the child should learn an art, not because he sees any talent, but because he would like the child to develop a particular art which he himself likes. (This is true of the academic or scholastic pursuits also.). There are many instances where plenty of time and money are wasted in this manner.

What I wish to emphasise is that the discovery of talent is not simple. In modern times a teacher cannot afford to say that a particular student is not talented and send him back. He has to survive. The parent does not bother to find it or does not know how to go about finding it. He sends his child to the classes because the neighbours' children go or because his wife tells him to do so.

Anyway the parent has to take the guidance of a knowledgeable person, if he is not able to judge the child's apti-

tudes. It is equally true to say that talented children do not get an opportunity to develop their potentialities due to various reasons, lack of understanding on the part of parents being an important one.

FINDING THE TEACHER

The second step is the search for a proper coach or master. The major limitations are availability, accessibility and affordability. A person who has been trained by a good teacher knows, not only the art proper, but also the values attached to each aspect of it. He will not proceed one step ahead without ensuring that the previous lessons are properly and correctly grasped by the student. He will also structure his lessons in such a way that each step smoothly leads to the next one; the foundation for a fine superstructure is firmly laid. I remember an instance when a top-ranking veena vidwan was approached by a parent for imparting advanced training to his daughter. The maestro declined in spite of the parent pleading for quite some time. After they had left, I asked the maestro why he declined to take the student, he said,

"If you bring me clay, I can mould it into beautiful shapes. But if you bring me a baked pot and ask me to convert it into beautiful shapes, it will only result in the pot cracking. The child has had lessons from someone who is noted for proceeding fast and teaching a large number of songs, etc., in a short time. There is scant regard for the technique of strumming and fingering, gamakas etc. I am sure that the child would have learnt a good number of songs including Pancharatna Krithis within a period of two to three years. Once I take up this tuition, I will have to start at

the beginning and ask her to forget whatever she has learnt so far. Our methods will not fuse. What they really want is probably the right to say that the child is my disciple by being with me for a short time. How can I permit it when the style of playing is not going to be mine?"

But all vidwans do not hold this view. They stipulate their terms and give new lessons without correcting the earlier mistakes, resulting in a jarring jumble of styles where the student has lost the pattern of the previous teacher and has not truly caught the style of the new master. Clarity, technical excellence, consistency and maturity which we expect in a rendering do not come without continuous practice under one master — good master.

In the course of time the student should develop his own style which should be acceptable to the music lovers and musicians. This is easier said than done. But at least one can see that the basics are learnt from someone who cares to ensure that the foundation is firm.

FACILITY FOR TUITION

The third aspect where the parent can help is in the facility given for the conduct of the lessons and for practice. This is a very complex area. 'Do's and 'Dont's are too many. How far the present system of running schools, with large number of pupils where regular classes with set syllabus and examinations and vacations are the practice, is suitable for bringing out the talents of children, is a debatable point. In any case they have come to stay and some of them have produced good perform-

ers (may be after some advanced coaching somewhere) and some very good teachers too. Groups have an advantage in that the children come to know their standard in comparison with others and competitive spirit develops.

In private teaching however, theoretically at least, there will be full concentration and personal attention of the teacher on the student's performance. Depending upon the grasping power of the student, the progress will be fast. But this happy position does not exist in many cases. Regularity in the classes is a casualty due to one reason or other especially lack of interest on the part of student.

One good teacher told me once,

"Parents are rich and hospitable, but the child's interest is ephemeral. The instruments are good and environment for practice is wonderful. I sit and practice for an hour if the child does not turn up or asks me to wait after I start the lesson and goes to attend to something else."

There are other cases where the student's parent or grand-parent comes and sits nearby to watch and criticise the manner in which the teacher takes lessons. Sometimes these are well-versed in the art and interfere in the actual coaching. But I have seen, on a couple of occasions, a parent quick on the move to beat the student the moment the teacher said that the student had not caught the lesson properly. Once or twice I have seen the grandparents neatly cornering the teacher in a web of old-time stories and anecdotes in such a way that he starts regretting the day he accepted the tuition.

I would like to bring out that parental interference should not prove to be an impediment. Take the summary way in which they suspend the music classes on the plea of approaching examinations! For weeks together the child does not have lessons or practice. Dare they prevent the child from watching a cricket match or tennis telecast or Grammy Award function during this time? The child simply tells them "Don't worry, I shall make up for this in two days". Can this not hold good for music? In fact, it does provide relaxation and acts as a tonic even when the child is tensed up over the approaching examinations.

Of course, there are many intelligent parents who do not interfere except in a very constructive way. They watch the progress the way the student practises or listen to the teaching silently so that they can at least point out when the student goes off the track while practising alone. They provide the instruments necessary and help to maintain them in a neat and serviceable condition. Their queries about the progress of the student addressed to the teacher are intelligent and they do not ask the teacher to hurry up or prepare the student for any specific competition.

CASUAL OPINIONS

One tendency which I have noticed in certain parents is fairly common and it can be disastrous. Whenever they come across someone in the same field of art, they invariably bring that person to their house and insist on the student rendering a few of the pieces learnt by him, for an evaluation. If the other person is good natured, he may perhaps give a non-committal reply or a word of praise. But it is quite likely

that he will express some opinion which may lead to the parent or student doubting the depth of the knowledge or sincerity of the teacher.

A parent must encourage the child in as many ways as possible and keep the teacher interested in the child's progress. A teacher's interest in the student is not always limited to the fee or other benefits like the yearly Vijaya Dasami Sambhavana. A good student who has a quick grasp and sustained interest in learning the art is always liked by the teacher. One of the greatest exponents of Harikatha mentioned while describing how Aadi Sankara was received as a disciple by Govindapada that a good Guru is always on the look out for a proper and deserving student to whom he can impart all his knowledge; monetary considerations never enter this area.

The classic example is that of Vazhuvur Sri Ramiah Pillai whose name was on every art lover's lips as soon as Smt. Kamala Laxman entered the dance field as Baby Kamala. For this Guru-Sishya relationship, the parent contributes a lot by affirming and reaffirming his or her faith in Guru, not in so many words, but by conduct. Even while communicating the opinion expressed by others, when the child is allowed to perform, there should be some restraint so as to avoid hurting the feelings of the Guru, and it should not amount to questioning him.

PARTICIPATION IN COMPETITION

Competitions in every field of art are the order of the day. There are competitions for sub-juniors, juniors, seniors, aspirants for scholarship, AIR prizes, etc., conducted by institu-

tions, organisations and at Government level. Success in these is definitely creditable and brings happiness to the students, parents and teachers. But there are serious limitations to these in promoting pursuit of art. Not all organisations which conduct these competitions prescribe minimum standards and grouping is done on the basis of age, or the knowledge of a few ragas or Talas. Every year prize has to be awarded to the best of those who contest, even if the best was not of very high standard.

There is no justification for competitions being made just a routine, where genuine interest is lacking. Nor is the attitude of some parents which as I stated at the beginning, leading to allegations of partiality of the judges, etc., healthy. Subjectivity cannot be eliminated altogether in judgement. What is more important is that these are intended to encourage students to take keen interest in learning the art. The extent of knowledge of the art and refinement through practice should deserve more of their attention than winning or losing at a competition.

HURRY TO PERFORM

The next point which strikes me is the hurry in getting a platform for the student to perform. I can understand a senior student being gradually induced into concerts by the Guru after he has imbibed the techniques of planning a 'kutcheri', getting along with the accompanists and, by and large, understanding audience expectations and responses. Many parents have complained to me that their children's teacher does not arrange for their performances or that he does not give them chance to sing independently when they assist him in his perfor-

mances. A Guru is the best judge of the competence and repertoire as well as maturity of the student. If he feels that the student is not competent, there is no point in pushing the student on to the stage.

METHOD OF PRACTICE

Parents are duty bound to see that their children practise their lessons adequately and the method of practice should be such that basic aspects like development of tone, clarity and speed, facility and grace in moving from one step to another, be it vocal or instrumental, as well as advanced and intricate lessons receive equal attention. The tendency among children is usually to practise only the most recent lesson or one which appeals to them. I have seen Gurus insisting on some of the voice culture or swarasthana and speed developing exercises in the morning and the nicer or advanced forms like new songs, raga, alapana or kalpana swaras in the evening. Old lessons, to keep them fully at one's 'finger-tips' are also to be practised, choosing some each day. But many parents do not look at this aspect at all — understandable in many cases because neither they nor their wards get the required leisure especially in city life. Still an attempt can be made to the extent possible.

DESTRUCTIVE DIVERSION

Some parents allow the children to stray into wrong tracks even before they pick up the basics well. I have seen a couple of instances where the children who were learning violin were encouraged by their parents to play cine songs before visitors before they have even reached Varnam stage. The children lost interest in the regular lessons which was 'boring and cumbersome'.

Likewise, I have heard several parents say that their children learning classical music vocal or instrumental, could handle other instruments, though uninstructed. Born genius apart, this is a little risky. There is nothing wrong if a student systematically learns an art which could be complementary to the main one which he is learning, under a competent master. There are many among the top-notch professionals and even amateurs who have become proficient in more than one branch. However haphazard straying into different areas when one is still not firm in any branch of art is not healthy. Parents have an important duty in this area especially under present circumstances when children find time constraint a serious handicap to cope with their scholastic pursuits and learning an art besides.

GRACE AND DIGNITY

Another related but somewhat neglected aspect, when an artiste comes to the performing stage, also has a bearing on the parents' duties. Kaavyas are divided into three varieties — 'Sraavya kaavyas', 'Drisya kaavyas' and 'Mista kaavyas', signifying respectively, those meant for hearing, those for seeing and those having both the features — like music, dance and drama. But in reality, when we attend a live performance we see the performers and also hear them. Definitely, graceful deportment whilst rendering music adds to the enjoyment. On the contrary when the performer indulges in ugly mannerisms, the degree of appreciation substantially diminishes. Even artistes who do not have a noticeable personality become personifications of elegance and dignity on the stage, by proper

development of graceful movements. Whilst for some, this comes as a natural gift, for others it has to be developed. Who could be a better guide in this than the parents?

Many a child develops ungainly postures and mannerisms during practice which persist in the advanced stages when one becomes a performer. At that late stage, any correction may have adverse effect on the performance.

MODEL PERFORMER

Ariyakudi was a model of grace and, though his method of rendering was considered by knowledgeable persons like Sri Mani Iyer as very difficult, it never looked as if he was exerting much to bring out his best. Music seemed to be flowing effortlessly and gracefully and Mani Iyer had captioned his write-up published in the *Ariyakudi* 74 souvenir "*Pechulla Varai Paaduvaa*" and concluded it with a remark that, for Ayyangar, singing never meant any extra effort; it did not involve any greater strain than what he required for conversing. Equally graceful were G.N.B., whose studied elegance lent a stateliness and the innocent smile of Madurai Mani Iyer, who reeled off strings of swaras and brightened the entire atmosphere of naturally lively concerts. Among ladies, M.S., D.K.P., stand out for their aesthetic appearance on the stage. There are many whom we can mention among the veterans and often the audience used to exclaim "*anaayasama paadaraar!*" Practice — strenuous, intelligent practice — was behind this seemingly effortless rendering and care for posture and mannerisms added dignity and grace.

ELIMINATE EGO, DEVELOP TEAM SPIRIT

A concert in the Indian Music is a combined effort. Even when we talk of a 'violin solo', it necessarily involves a percussion support. Naturally, there has to be understanding and co-operation among the artistes, whether main or supporting. Often one or the other happens to be 'senior' or better equipped, but he has to get along with the others. This becomes easy if the parents help the children to cultivate the proper spirit. If they themselves mention day-in and day-out that their child would shine only in the company of 'so and so', how can we expect the young artiste to be level-headed? The same applies to youngsters taking supporting roles too.

The success of a concert depends upon several factors — place, type of audience, occasion, placement of the platform, seating arrangements, quality of the amplifier system, duration etc., apart from the standard, physical and psychological condition of the artistes, choice and sequencing of the pieces to be rendered. Mutual understanding among artistes gets over very many of the adverse factors, which necessarily involves a brief appraisal of the situation, communication and consultation and acceptance of a good suggestion wherever possible. It is my experience that many prominent and top-ranking artistes do this and their concerts have been successful. Sometimes ego clashes have prevented such consultations or acceptance of suggestions though valid. These have affected the concerts. While this is to some extent understandable in artistes who are already established, one feels sad when this tendency is observed among younger artistes who are just making their

debut, especially if it is initiated or encouraged by the parents. It is the duty of the parents to instill a sense of humility, tolerance and co-operation in their children who are to give public performance.

PLANNING A CONCERT

While I am not going into details, at this juncture, as to how it could be done, it is my firm belief that whoever has to face an audience, must plan and structure his performance beforehand. In fact there should be a contingency plan for short notice performances and performances with unfamiliar accompanists as well. I believe most parents and teachers do ask the young performers a few questions each time about the key aspects, such as choice of songs, sequencing, etc. Within the time available, the youngster should also be encouraged to listen to performances of good standard, after he has acquired enough knowledge and stability to appreciate and evaluate the performance without getting unduly influenced.

Another important aspect of public relations is the manner and extent as well as timing of the exposure of an artiste as a public performer. Once an artiste makes his debut seriously as a performer, he must keep it up at least for two to three decades, unless he decides to keep his appearances absolutely casual, purely as a hobby. Parents play a dominant and vital part in this area. Maintenance of the prominent place once attained, is important. Over-exposure is dangerous. I can only caution the parents of gifted and deserving child artistes of the damage done by carelessness or over-ambitious projections. Inviting critics and response to criticism are also matters requiring careful thought and tact.

A Nritya 'Mela'

A variety of dance styles and an assortment of personalised idioms in a 'Package Programme'. That is how one would describe the week-long Nritya Mahotsav organised by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi in association with the Nehru Centre and held at the centre's plush auditorium in Bombay in November, 1991. After the 1986 award presentation ceremony and festival thereof, this was the major event the SNA chose to hold in this metropolis.

In its mission of promoting and propagating performing arts, the SNA has been holding such "Art Utsavs" of late, at various centres other than its headquarters. The Nritya Mahotsav, the first of its kind held in Bombay, was a Nritya Mela — a Mela with taste and tradition — and was dedicated to the dance streams featuring Bharata Natyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohini Attam, Odissi, and Manipuri. Twentyfour sessions in a week-long festival was a bit tiring perhaps, but surprisingly the Nehru Centre was packed to capacity throughout. The recitals moved in slick precision and punctuality was the watch word! Most of them were quality performances and that made the festival a richly rewarding experience.

The artistes selected represented different styles with an assortment of their own personalised streams and with a track record of having participated in big-banner festivals in India as well as abroad; no wonder they drew crowds through the week-long festival.

In the Mahotsav, Kathak had a lion's share with 6 sessions, followed by

Bharata Natyam and Manipuri 5 each, Mohini Attam and Odissi, ranking next with 3 each and Kuchipudi with just 2 sessions.

The selection of artistes did patronise Delhi and the Kathak Kendra, but this cannot be held against the artistes for, far from treating this as one more routine affair, they gave off their best within the time allotted to them. Save for a couple of performances, all were good, with trends and innovative moves adding a special dimension to the styles. There was, in fact, a return to tradition, an effort to propagate lost numbers, a peep into the abstract with an intellectual approach in pure dance-number movements, as well as a thematic-number focusing on lofty philosophies with an undercurrent of social apathy. The dance choreography remained within classical norms. Even when folk flourishes were added, they had a relevance but were not titillating devices.

That music does not play a subordinate role in a dance recital but is equally if not more important, was well recognised, and in quite a number of recitals the visual interpretations were enriched by aural enhancement bringing in the two segments of melody and mime into a whole compact projection.

Mention must be made of Hema Aziz who contributed significantly to the enrichment of Kathak recitals of the duo, Vaswati Mishra and Durga Arya, and Prerna Shrimali. If the duo verily described the grace and grandeur of Lord Padmanabha in Swati Tirunal's *Moha-*

namaya Tava Murali and Prerna brought out the vibrance of the *Tandav* in her *Natraj Sthuti*, the enchantment of Radha lost in the divine beauty of Krishna, it was due in no small measure to the touching melody of Hema. As for the dance of these artistes, the Kathak duo, Vaswati Mishra and Durga, stole the limelight on the opening night by their refined articulation of *nritta* and *abhinaya*. There was a touch of class and grace in their rendition. Maharaja Swati Tirunal's Hindi composition, '*Mohanamay Tava Murali*' in *Ragamalika* made a visual impact as the evocative music by Hema Aziz lent an impressive aural dimension to it.

Prerna Shrimali's pleasant deportment, soft, graceful gyrations and incisive footwork brought an artistic sophistication. Working wonders with *Jaya-kari* and with a touch of soft splendour she presented *Natraj Sthuti* in *Dhrupad Ang*, a *Ganesh Paran*, *Thumri* of Padmakar, depicting Radha lost in Krishna's divine beauty.

Displaying dynamism and sizzling rhythmic with aplomb and spontaneity, Saswati Sen carried Pt. Birju Maharaj's style and Kathak Kendra's tradition with neat exposition on the concluding day. Dovetailing *nritta* into the emotive motif of Surdas Bhajan '*Shyam tere murali me lek bajavun*', she tellingly delineated Radha's desire to don Krishna's role and play the bansuri only to realise that it was something beyond her to feign godhood even for a moment.

The seasoned Sunayana excelled in *abhinaya*. There was restraint and deep emotional involvement with the character portrayed. The *Nayaka-Nayaki* tiff portrayed was an interesting

aside. Her daring *Abhisarika*, highlighted in a *Bandish* of poet Shiva's lyrics, came alive in her visualisation, accentuated by musical evocation of Dhanashree Pandit.

Urmila Nagar is an old-timer, who sings while she dances. A well-trained classical vocalist and a dancer of merit her dance portrays the lyricism of music lacing through the lilt of *Jaya*. Very fastidious about her technique and improvisation, she went about her recital in an informal mood with a *lec-dem* touch, at times. What one admired in her was her spontaneity and sustaining quality. The Jankiprasad-Jaipur-Lucknow Gharanas thus made quite an impact in the Mahotsava.

The Odissi sessions were uniformly good too. Madhvi Mudgal, the first to be presented in Odissi *Shalli*, is a natural dancer and one who believes in the effulgence of art with spontaneous subtlety. One was touched by her sathvik approach and subtle delineation of the fragile Odissi. A topnotcher in the art form, she knows the art of captivating the audience with a natural expression, tempered with restraint and reticence. She wove the Sathvik into the fabric of dance in such a way that it looked part of her personality. The Krishna theme had natural eloquence in her presentation, the Lord lulling them all into inaction with his enchanting music, Radha's reaction to it, her engrossment to the utter neglect of her chores came off with a telling effect. The music to this Oriya song in slow pace had its part to play as well.

Kiran Sehgal's had all the beauty of the frescoes. Odissi is known for. Her *Dashavatari* brought out both the beni-

gn and the belligerent in the Devi. The ten manifestations moved on with seasoned unfoldment with no over-playing of drama or theatrics, not even mood-evoking effects from the wings. The soft chant and slow moving melody added its own soul of music to the visual. Her Radha as a Mugdha Nayika was a well-treated portrayal.

The three Bharata Natyam recitals that the writer could attend projected both conventional and novel experiments worked out on this art form. Lakshmi Viswanathan's, an Ekartha depiction, the only dance-drama in the Mahotsava, focussed, on the thematic exposition of a Shiva bhakta elevated to sainthood. Glimpses of Gopalakrishna Bharati's 'Nandanar Charitam', portraying the travails and tribulations of a Harijan bhakta, Nandanar, who ultimately transcends the social stigma, were compactly packed in an hour-long presentation. Tastefully choreographed, keeping *nritta* to the minimum and *sancharis* to the essentials, Lakshmi gave the storyline a fluent exposition. The songs selected were apt, only it required a mature musician at the wings to accord the vocal rendition a greater accent on *bhakti*, *bhava* instead of artistic modulations.

A conventional Bharata Natyam, no doubt it was, but what an unconventional way to dance! Alarmel Valli's recital, immediately following Madhvi Mudgal's sathvic exposition, was an anti-climax. Though one hails her art instincts and talent in choreography, it is disheartening to see too much of an exaggeration in exposition. Why those coy glances, pouting lips and hip twists in *nritta*?

Bharata Natyam had a new facet projected by Sucheta Chapekar in a flowing *Nritya Ganga*, an attempt to blend *Bharata Natyam* with Hindustani music. Sucheta is not new to the Bombay audience. Her proficiency in the dance form, her efforts to bring to fore the Marathi compositions of the Maratha kings of Tanjore are too well-known to reiterate. While her *abhinaya* blended finely with the Hindustani music excellently provided by Pratibha Karnik, the *nritta* had some rough edges with too elementary a *Sargam* stance and the *Pakhwaj* not matching the *mridangam* *sollus*.

Trying to form a new Margam based on the conventional Bharata Natyam format, Sucheta presented a Namah (invocation to Lord Ganesha), a *Sargam* — pure dance with a prelude of Bandhish, an Ashtamangal, a pure dance, offering prayers to the Ashtadig devatas, Chatuspushti, an *abhinaya* score from "Malavikagnimitra" and a Chatura, combining Sahitya, *Sargam*, Tarana etc. To those who have seen Sucheta as a mature Bharata Natyam exponent, both in *nritta* and *abhinaya*, this experiment appeared to be still in the formative phase. The *nritta* bols and *adavu* intricacies, the compositions of *Sargams* were quite elementary and the technique was simple to suit the wings. Of course her *abhinaya* reflected her own innate evocation.

Without prejudice, Pakhawaj, whatever its tonal competence and the artiste's proficiency, could not substitute a *Mridangam* — the soul behind the *sollukattus*. It is premature to comment on the viability of the venture becoming a parallel margam. Any novel experiment has to go through the test of time before being accepted into

the tradition, by which time some more improvements could be worked on it.

Kalamandalam Kshemavathi is a name to reckon with in Mohini Attam. The only performance of this style the writer could attend, Kshemavathi impressed with her polished performance. Her height, quite tall she is, and heavy build had little impeded her finesse. Her Ashtarasa depiction to Soundaryalahari verse, was a vivid picturisation of the Rasas through Netrabhinaya, and one of the touching renditions in the Mahotsava where mime fused with melody. It was a rare occasion too, when music had so much of classical weight and evocation.

The two Kuchipudi numbers were by artistes from Delhi, the opening by dance-couple Radha-Raja Reddy and the mainstream concluding session by Swapnasundari and both were brilliant performances. Reducing their dizzying speed, shedding their craze for the spectacular and virulent postures considerably, Radha-Raja Reddy presented *Kuchipudi* that had its native verve and vitality, dramatic impact and a refined expression. A touch of *Bharata Natyam* might have crept in but that did not distract one from Kuchipudi spirit they evinced. Their *Nritta*, their solo *abhinaya* and *Tarangam* made quite an impressive start of the Mahotsava. The opening with 'Gananathaya Namaste' (Gaula) was sombre and infused with *bhakti*. The Mandari Jatiswaram brought out their choreographic skill and performing elan, soft and vibrant footwork movements recaptured the *Tandava Lasya* elements. Radha's *Pravesha Daru* from Gollbhama, depicting a

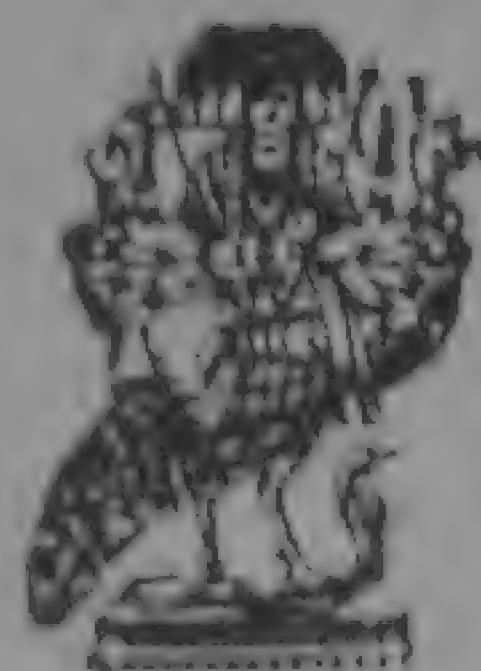
proud curd-seller turned devotee, was a piece of fine dance while Raja's 'Narasimhavatharam' unfolded the Roudra without the ghastly drama. The recital was capped with a brisk *Tarangam*.

It was pleasing to see Swapnasundari in her element with all the sincerity to tradition. No showmanship, no over-acting. She showed her prowess bringing to fore some of the lost treasures of Kuchipudi repertoire, Chetlur Chengalvaraya Shastri's compositions. The *Venkatesa Stuthi* and *Meenakshi Sundareswarar Sabdam* were fine *abhinaya* numbers tempered with brisk *nritta*. The *Jatiswaram* and the *Tarangam* brought her penchant for rhythmic intricacies Swapna had woven them in plenty and danced the *nritta* numbers in gay abandon. The slick Javali in Pharaz portraying a Swadhinabhatrika Nayika was an expressional excellence. The wings gave her solid support.

There was excitement in dance, provided by Pung Cholam and Dhol Chelam by Manipuri Jogai Marup. But the Vasant Raas put up by the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipuri Dance Academy could not be appreciated as the Shoka Rasa (music) emanating from the wings was not in tune with the "rejoicing" that was going on stage.

What was the purpose of repeating the numbers on the concluding day? But the JNMDA is SNA's baby. So, a privilege?

— Sulochana Rajendran



Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.)

292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Sion East, Bombay-400 022.
Phones : 482428, 483978, 483063

PROGRAMMES FOR FEBRUARY 1992 (D.V.)

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------|
| 8-2-1992 | Shri T. V. Sankaranarayanan | — Vocal |
| Saturday | Shri M. Chandrasekaran | — Violin |
| 6.00 p.m. | Shri Tiruvarur Bakthavathsalam | — Mridangam |
| | Shri V. Nagarajan | — Kanjira |
| 9-2-1992 | Smt. Chitra Visweswaran — "Krishnamritam" — | |
| Sunday | (A Solo Dance feature based on the | |
| 6.00 p.m. | works of Purandaradasa) | |
| | Choreographed by Chitra Visweswaran. | |
| | Music Composed by Shri R. Visweswaran | |

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INDIAN GYMKHANA GROUNDS, MATUNGA,
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THYAGARAJA AARADHANA DAY CELEBRATIONS

- 24-1-1992 — Friday
8.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. Group Singing of "PANCHARATNA KRITIS" by Faculty Members & Students of the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya and Bombay Vidwans.

6.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. MUSIC CONCERTS

25-1-1992 — Saturday
6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. MUSIC CONCERTS

SAINT PURANDARADASA DAY

3-2-1992 — Monday
7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. DEVAR NAMAS

4-2-1992 — Tuesday
7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. SYAMA SASTRY DAY
MUSIC CONCERTS

CULTURAL SCENE IN BOMBAY

A rare opportunity of vintage music the Bombay rasikas had when Sangeetha Kalanidhi D. K. Pattammal sang for the Shanmukhananda at the Indian Gymkhana grounds towards the close of October, 1991. The open pandal cutcheri, though seemed to have affected her voice (for next morning when she gave a lec-dem, she was complaining of sore throat which she rarely got, she said), took many an old resident of this metropolis down memory lane.

DKP's recital reminded us of our rich heritage and tradition, and the need of the hour to slow down the linear development and move depth-wise. The concert was a 'lesson' to the upcoming artistes — a topic on which she spoke well the next day. It contained a message of caution — 'this far and no further'. The proportion, the balance, the variety, the purity and diction with bhava — all elevated the quality of music.

Starting with an invocatory, *Gajavada Beduve* (Kedaram), DKP rendered a serene *Dasarata Nandana* (Asaveri) and followed it with a rare gem of lilting rhythm, *Venkatesa Natham Jagajala Paalam Vande* (Brindavana Saranga). *Pantuvarali* and *Ramanatham Bhajeham* are her old favourites. Her *alapana*, *kriti* rendition with *Niraval-swaras* had a proportioned beauty. A shower of poignant melody came after, stroking one's heart strings, when she sang the stance, *Kanrin Kuralaikettu* leading on to *Enraikku Siva krupai Va-*

rumo (Mukhari). The plea in the music was touching.

Muthu Thandavar's gracious composition, *Kaanaamal Irundalum* (*Chakra-vakam*) was a treat, with the *alapana* spelling the *saukhyam* in her music. Strained nuances here and there never hindered listeners' pleasure. If *Ahiri* and *Challare* took her to poignant heights, *Bhairavi alapana* resuscitated her renditions with vitality, and *vidwat*. Higher forays posed no problem and the *azhutham* in her picturisation brought to focus the depth of its nuances. Quite aptly she chose. *Nee paadamule gathiyani*, a *kriti* not much in currency today. The concluding phase with *Kanakasaila* (*Punnagavarali*) and *Ragamalika virutham* once again highlighted Pattammal's involvement with *Bhava*.

The accompanists, Sriram Kumar (violin), Suresh (mridangam) and Vailom Gopalakrishnan (ghatam) were all from renowned musical family. Young though, they played with restraint and toed DKP's style with a relish.

Giving an enlightening lecture demonstration despite health hazards, the septuagenarian spoke of her own Sadhaka maintained to this day since her childhood and advised the youngsters, not in any sermonising tone but full of 'Vatsalya' to take to music with some reverence and discipline, learn with assiduity, practise with regularity, refrain from impulsive haste to performing. "Hold your reins on performing impulse, direct the energy to Sadhaka, performing opportunity would come of

its own accord," she finely put it. She could not have better timed to persuade them against learning 'performance-oriented'. Concert-craft is something to be imbibed naturally, not practised by rote or through notation she implied. Like her sangeetham her speech too was 'Sathvik' which sure would have captivated many youngsters among the audience. Her 'weapon of persuasion', one felt after the lec-dem, would yield better success than pressure.

An artiste of few words, but with conviction DKP demonstrated how to treat the kritis as regards rendition, interpretation etc. That a knowledge of the Sahitya and its import and an understanding of the composer's mind are very essential could not have been better focused than her rendition of Dikshitar's *Rainachandram Bhavayami* (Vasanthi) in poised Vilamba Kala. Has anyone ever sung this piece in Vilambam? It has invariably been a 'filler' piece gearing the momentum of the concert like *Ninnuvina* (Navarasakannada) or *Raghuvamsa* (Kadanakuthoothalam).

Havi Kiran, the other artiste, of the month played next enthralling one and all. A traditionalist, he is a perennial seeker of deeper nuances our rich legacy of Ragas open up to. "Each practising session brings on to you some more revelations," he says excitedly and is never tired, repeating his *riyaz* with renewed vigour.

The Chitra Veena (nee Gottuvadyam), sophisticated with sympathetic strings by his grandfather Narayana Iyengar, just sings in Ravi's hands. Ragas and compositions spring alive with gayaki clarity and improvisation traverses the depth and dimension. Once the *gottu*

is placed on the Chitra Veena, it is music with heart and soul.

His October concert for the Sabha had another unique feature. Ravi Kiran served the concert as a musical dialogue with his accompanying young talent Gayathri (Violin), encouraging her at every possible turn to come out with her excellence and guiding her at crucial junctures. One may say there was a rapport between the two in imagination and expression. With Narendran's fine strokes the trio made it an interesting concert.

"Raghunayaka" (Hamsadhwani), "Evarani" (Devamruthavarshini), "Manavyala" (Nalinakanthi) in their gamaka minutiae put the concert on a solid stand. Purvikalyani, an alapana echoing sweet poignance had melodic depth in his deflections and delicate strokes. Gayathri for her part, enhanced the enchantment and the two played "Ninnuvina" with abandon complementing each other on Niraval and Swara sallies.

Another touching picturisation was Yadukulakambhoji (*Hecharigagarara*) followed by a serene Vagadeeswari (*Paramathmudu*). Dharmavati RTP in Khanda Triputa with Ragamalika Swaras was again a fine musical dialogue.

Kudos to Ravi Kiran for his commendable gesture in promoting talents and Gayathri too for making her Guru T. S. Krishnaswami, a great master of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, proud.

December concerts of the Shanmukhananda were duo-presentations, a vocal duet and a violin duet. The Bombay sisters, Saroja-Lalitha and Vadakancheri Brothers, V. V. Subra-

maniam and V. V. Ravi, popular and enjoying quite a fan-following regaled the audience with quality music. The pitch of the sisters is slightly reduced, but their verve and vigour, the dueting spirit and performing effervescence remained the same. Some modulations are discernible in their renditions and that makes their music more enjoyable.

V. V. S. & V. V. R. have now settled down to a Naya-oriented Bani and that has automatically put them on a Vilamba pace. Which brings on to their music certain tranquillity. No wonder with some performing punch added to it they made their music entertaining as well as elevating.

Diwali was celebrated as Dikshitar Day at the Sabha, and in a three hour session students from various institutions and teachers paid their pranams to the savant. Among the budding talents, Sai Bhavani from Delhi a disciple of O. V. Subramaniam stood outstanding, for her melodious voice, and succinct rendering. R. Kalyana Ram, students of Naada Brahmam, Prabha Hari of Nritya Geethanjali and Jayashree Gautam of Shanmukhananda Vidyalaya were others who participated. Accompanists too were drawn from students, especially the percussionists.

"In the days of yore, Maharajas honoured the Vidwans at their durbars; today the Nehru Durbar (Centre) is doing the same". A crisp speech by "Bharata Simham" T. K. Mahalingam Pillai marked the inauguration of the 3-day "Golden Greats Bharata Natyam Mahotsav," organised by Calcutta based Durbar with the sponsorship of ITC. Lighting the kuthuvilakku and reciting

a Simhanandana stance, playing the cymbals, the Natyacharya gave the Mahotsav a traditional opening. Started by Haidar couple, Omer and Nazreen as a pastime of "taking music and dance" to schools in Calcutta, the Durbar has widened its horizon promoting culture on a large scale.

Presenting talented freshers on the same platform alongside experienced and top artistes is a laudable feature in Durbar's promotional objective. The "Golden Greats" comprised dancers from three levels, although one may say that there was not a proportionate representation of all the Banis.

Among the participants, Padma Subramanyam, Chitra Visweswaran and Kanaka Srinivasan belonged to the higher echelons while Leela Samson, Malavika, Sarukkai, represented the middle order while Sujata Srinivasan, Vani Ganapathy and Parul Shah Patel were forging steadily, and Uma-Venkitt couple on the cross-roads working for a firm ground.

Of the dances some were good, some mediocre and some disappointing.

It was a short, sweet homecoming for Parvathi Narayanan (nee Dandapani), a dancer of poise and prowess from the USA to present before select audience her art progress and propagation in shores beyond. Keeping up the tradition and not wee bit diluting, this promising disciple of Guru Rajee Narayan presented select compositions of Bharatiyar in Varnam and Padam formats, her own Guru's Padam and Uththukadu Venkata Kavi's Tillana thrilling the Rasi-kas.

— KINNARI

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MUSIC & DANCE FESTIVAL AT HYDERABAD
IN AID OF "SHANMUKHANANDA HALL RECONSTRUCTION FUND"

21.3.1992 Saturday	Shri T. V. Sankaranarayan	— Vocal
	Shri Peri Sriramamurthy	— Violin
	Shri Vellore Ramabhadran	— Mridangam
	Shri Somayajulu	— Ghatam
22.3.1992 Sunday	Shri U. Srinivas	— Mandolin
	Shri Peri Sriramamurthy	— Violin
	Shri Vellore Ramabhadran	— Mridangam
	Shri Somayajulu	— Ghatam
23.3.1992 Monday	Shri & Smt. Raja & Radha Reddy	— Kuchipudi Dance Recital

Venue : RAVINDRA BHARATI HALL, HYDERABAD.

AWAIT MORE DETAILS

S. Seshadri
K. S. Krishnan
Hon. Secretaries

Mozart, The Unique Musician

By

S. RAMACHANDRAN

(Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756-91), the Austrian musical composer, born at Salzburg, began writing music when hardly five years old and gave public concerts of his own music at six. His was a short and tragic life, but his works have remained among the world's greatest musical compositions. Though not formally schooled he was his father's disciple and learned about different musical styles from the musicians he met in his travels throughout Europe.

A concertmaster at the court of Archbishop of Salzburg at 14, and appointed court-composer to the Austrian Emperor at 31, Mozart was in perennial penury, but was constantly composing, even to within a few hours of his death when he left *The Requiem*, one of his finest pieces, unfinished. It is said that a mysterious stranger asked Mozart to compose a *Requiem Mass* (music for a funeral service) in 1791, Mozart, very ill at that time, began imagining that the music was for his own funeral. *The Requiem* was later completed by one of his pupils.

We publish below a tribute to mark the bi-centenary year of his death. — Ed.)

*"Mozart makes you believe in God —
Much more than going to church —
Because it cannot be by chance —
That such a phenomenon arrives into
this world."*

Music is not a mere science of mathematical symbols. In its dissemination, the Art makes a rational adjustment with certain signs, symbols, do's and don'ts, which are convincing and statutory. If these regulations are not available, the creative output triggered under the stimulus of Art runs haywire and clogs in confusion. Thus, our intellectual efforts articulate clear of confusion and interpret an identity for each strand and shade of musical note. Indeed, the scenario is eloquent and colourful. It begets a fine sense of involvement and an inspired outpouring which is an inseparable part of the artistic talent.

Such talented artists come up rather few and far between. We make the verdict and look upon them as the inspired muse. They appear in the manner of a Mozart, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven and so on. The numbers they have poured out are rich in every sense of the term. We notice in their musical numbers a blend of the humanism of a Shakespeare, the delicacy of a Kalidasa, the passionate lyricism of a Shelley and the devout intensity of a Tyagaraja, to put it short.

OBSCURITY AND FAME

It is a strange part of historical phenomenon that all these artists remained obscure during their life-time. Only succeeding generations could have it in their lot to recognise, reminisce and figure out these great profiles.

The year 1991 marked the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. Mozartiana, as we may call it, resonates and permeates the entire area wherever European classical music is cherished and preserved. No matter if he lived there or not, even at culturally disparate distances Mozart's memory is being respectfully honoured. Opera houses all over present delectable orchestra programmes built over his works.

MOZART AND BEETHOVEN

Like many unassuming gifted composers, during his span of life Mozart did not solicit public acclamation for his musical works; neither did he look for approval from the fastidious few. Perhaps it is only now, two centuries later, that his brilliance is being acknowledged. Even in the nineteenth century, when musical romanticism was having a favourable phase, Mozart did not get a fair deal. His music was pretty at the ears but did not touch the heart and soul. So it was described about him. As for the twentieth century, Beethoven has often had an edge over Mozart for a cross-section of opinion. However, it would now be admitted on all hands that Mozart's stature is in full form.

His operas and symphonies composed two centuries ago have a freshness as though of prevailing currency. Every orchestral group effectively handles in depth his symphonies. The music contained in them is a matter of permanent joy to listen to. Incidentally, let us refresh our memories that what we have often heard as the intermission refrain on Indian T.V., *Ithna na mujse, tu pyar badha*", (Hindi movie : *Chhaya*) is based on the 40th Symphony of Mozart.

One need not go far to seek the reason why Mozart's music came to be popular rather belatedly. It was due to the advent of Beethoven on the horizon. Beethoven was a great musical humanist and literally rebelled against the cruel and iron hand. His *Eroica* Symphony is a matter of ready reference in this regard. Beethoven's will was his sustaining force and demanded the greatness of a composer, as if by right.

Mozart was totally different. He had the gift of a pitch fully in tune. His compositions were directly straight in the final form, as though they were dropped from heaven, whereas with Beethoven much of scribbling had to be deciphered to articulate into final shape. Between the two, one was a case of untiring hard work, while the other had brilliant natural ability. In a society of egalitarian trends and perspectives, there always exists a sceptical attitude towards geniuses, and Mozart too was not left out. In sum total, some quarters of opinion feel that Beethovens can be made, but Mozarts are born; hence the reason we do not get Mozarts often. We may, however, see the like of him in a French romantic, Camille Saint-Saens, and Leonard Bernstein of the American soil.

STYLIST IN HIS OWN RIGHT

Mozart's style did not perhaps carry the incubus of any innovation. But it is to his credit that he safely geared the prevailing trend and taste, touched it up suitably in order that in the sequence he personified a musical style, himself. He examined the popularly current forms and energised them with a pulsating fervour. His music represented the essentially human touch and projected a

concrete form. In the process, it gathered sufficient resiliency and made acceptable progress, free from pomp and make-believe. His last three symphonies in E Flat, G Minor and C Major are the hallmark of perfection — a legacy only an inspired musician could possibly accomplish and bequeath to posterity.

NATURE UNKINDLY TO ARTISTS

God's ways are inscrutable. He blesses individuals with talents. He, however, does not furnish them with a smooth sail throughout. They have to fight against odds. Erratic public opinion and inconsistent professional attitudes work their way to hinder the progress of artists. Recognition and fame come to many a genius rather late. Often all men of arts, not excluding Music and even literature, for that matter, come up to settle for a posthumous recognition. The cruel hand of nature does not even leave them at that. Physical illnesses also demand their toll of

pinpricks and pressures on such blessed souls.

Mozart was stricken with severe rheumatic fever and acute bronchitis as an almost life-long ailment. Towards the end, he contracted other infections too and suffered considerable pain and agony from which he never recovered. He died on December 5, 1791. When he died, he was nearly 36. But, like a Shelley or Keats, within this short span of life he could compose a whole life's work of masterpieces. His musical notes were legion. For an evaluation, not one of them could be considered as unnecessary.

Mozart lives as long as the magic spell of music permeates the globe. In the words of George Bernard Shaw :

"Mozart had immense powers, both of work and enjoyment : joked, laughed, told stories, talked, travelled, played, sang, rhymed, danced, masqueraded, acted and played billiards well enough to delight in them all; and he had the charm of a child at 30 just as he had the seriousness of a man at 5".

OBITUARY

At the time of going to the press, *Shanmukha* was shocked and grieved to learn of the sudden demise of Pandit Kumar Gandharva, the *avant garde* maestro of Hindustani music, and Shri K. S. S. Mani, ex-Vice President of Larsen & Toubro. The loss to the music world and to the *Shanmukhananda Sabha* is irreparable.

Shri K. S. S. Mani was a dedicated member of the Managing Committee for over a decade and his contribution to the growth of the *Sabha* during its formative years and especially to the construction of the *Shanmukhananda Hall* could not be contained in words.

A SISHYA REMINISCES

(Natyacharya Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai recently passed away. One of the inventive and most successful masters of Bharata Natyam he was a trend-setter with a conviction in traditional base. He inherited a rich heritage and left behind an equally if not wealthier legacy moulded to contemporary tastes.

The master is no more but the Bani continues. During the years the style has spread its influence far and near, with off-shoots of 'Sishya-Gurus' and eminent performers, adding their own flavour and flourish. His son Samraj took on the Vazhuvoor mantle even when the father was alive and carries on.

Below we publish one of Ramiah Pillai's disciples, Kanaka Srinivasan's nostalgic recollections).

It was thirty years ago. My father took me one day to a dance programme. The programme had already started when we reached the auditorium. The stage was brightly lit. The dancer resembled the Goddesses in the portrait in our puja room. I watched keenly. I asked my father what she was doing. "The dancer is asking Lord Krishna to come to her soon", he said. I thought, if I got on to the stage I would also be able to see and talk to the Lord Himself. I told my father, I wanted to go on the stage and do the same as the dancer did. "For that you must know dancing," he said.

All the way back home, I kept on begging him to let me learn dance. He engaged a teacher to train me in Bharata Natyam. I was not happy as the lesson comprised only the basic steps.

I told my father that I wanted to learn from the same master who taught the dancer whom we saw the other day. (Only later on I came to know that the dancer was Smt. Kamala and the Guru Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai).

My father was hesitant as he thought Ramiah Pillai would charge a very high fee. But when he took me to Pillai he was surprised to hear the Guru say that he would charge no monthly fees but would take money only when I became a good dancer.

A regular sight after I joined the class was Ramiah Pillai sitting in front of a steel trunk in which he had kept a few portraits of Gods and Goddesses, and his Guru. Though he would be reciting slokas, his eyes were always on us, students, learning the Adavus. If any of us made mistakes, he would immediately tell his son to stop playing the 'Thattuk-

kazhi' and correct us. At times he himself got up and showed us how to do the *Kitathaka Tharikita Thom*. It was surprising that for a person of such heavy build he was very agile. His small eyes would twinkle, sparkle and splash with different emotions whenever he interpreted a song text. His 'Netrabhinaya' was something unique to be seen to be believed. On some days he would narrate stories from Puranas. Sometimes after the class, he would take us all in his car and buy us tender coconut water or Sarasaparilla Sharbat from the corner shop and then drop us near the bus stand.

Those days dancers performed items composed by the Tanjore Quartet, from Kshetragna Padams and a few other erotic compositions. It was Ramiah Pillai who choreographed Swati Tirunal's *Bhavayami Raghuramam*, a Ramayana Ragamalika, *Kamalajasya*, a Dasavathara composition, the songs of Arunachala Kavirayar, Gopala Krishna Bharatiyar, and Pasurams of Periyazhwar and Andal. It was actually he who introduced more of Bhakti Bhava in the repertoire when erotic Padams formed the major part of the Margam. I was told that Ramiah Pillai presented dance items of the songs of the revolutionary poet Subramania Bharati even when there was a ban on them during the freedom struggle.

He gave visual interpretation to Tyagaraja kritis. It was Ramiah Pillai who put Bharata Natyam on the world map.

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